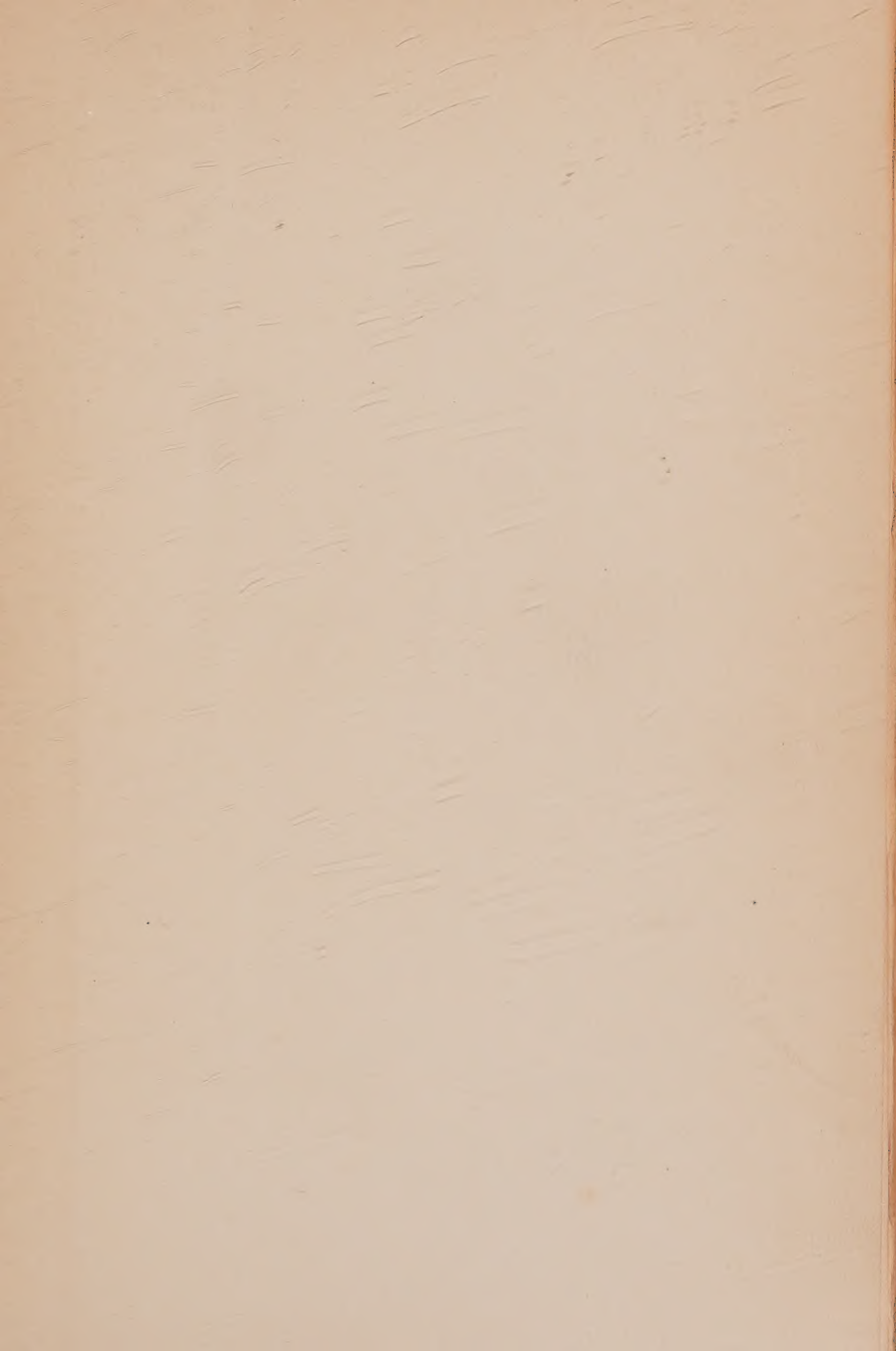


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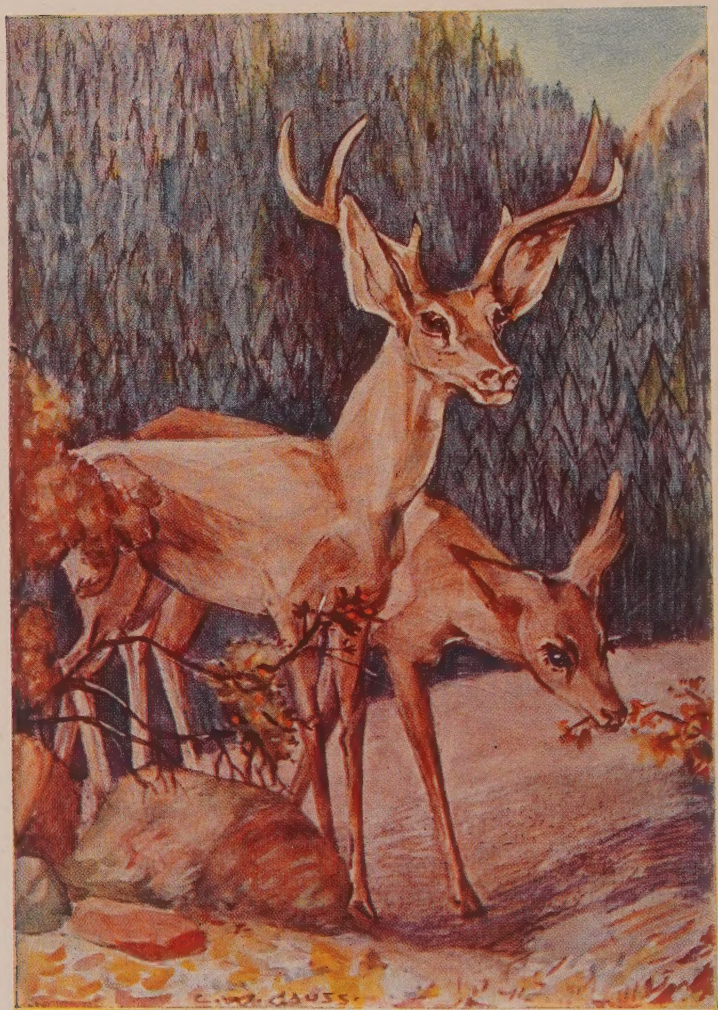
MARIANNE
GAUSS



FIVE ANIMALS

THEIR BOOKS





THE CAPTAIN BECAME FAMOUS AMONG MULE DEER

FIVE ANIMALS

—THEIR BOOKS—

BY

MARIANNE GAUSS

With Many Illustrations by

C. W. GAUSS



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
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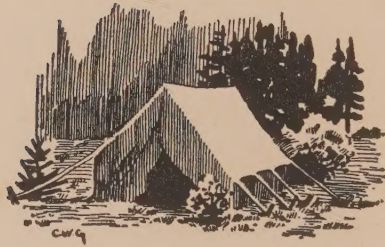
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FIVE ANIMALS: *THEIR BOOKS*

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Preface

(Addressed to the Teacher)

THIS collection of stories about North American animals is intended for use as a supplementary reader. Its use by a class should result in some independent nature study on the part of the children, especially through the medium of sketching animals from nature.

The drawing here suggested belongs to Nature Work rather than to Art, since its aim is to induce that close study of animals which always gives the animal-painter a minute knowledge of their structure and habits. But the directions for making drawings are carefully planned and will be found to be according to the principles of form representation. The artist who furnishes them—also the illustrations for the stories—has been for a number of years supervisor of children's art work in the public schools of Greeley, Colorado.

The exercises outlined at the conclusion of the book will probably be varied by the individual teacher, who will adapt the nature work to her own locality and to the capacity of her pupils. It is suggested that they be interspersed with the readings—for example, that the notebook work on the rodents be done as soon as the class has finished reading the rabbit and squirrel stories.

The stories are based upon observations made in the

Preface

open, much as the children are directed to make theirs under the heading "Field Work." Writer and Artist tramped the hills together, getting data and pictures at the same time. To the material thus obtained have been added all data obtainable from hunters and other pioneers, and from observations of captive animals in the Denver City Park. Details have been carefully verified by applying to the authorities. In some instances personal observations known to be correct have been rejected for the book because the authorities did not agree. This was done because children should not be confused by disputed points. Theodore Roosevelt remarks, "You never know how an individual animal is going to act." But the aim of this book is to present the typical behavior of North American animals in the wild state.

Three of the animals chosen as story material are common throughout the country wherever Nature has her way: the deer, the rabbit (or, properly speaking, hare), and the chipmunk. The mountain lion, or panther, was included because it belongs to the pioneer history of our country and is still an interesting wild-life factor in the less settled portions. The pronghorn is under such careful protection nowadays that it is an object of public interest. It should be known, for its beauty and sagacity, to every American child.

MARIANNE GAUSS.



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*The Wisest Animal
on the Prairie*





CHAPTER I

"Never take an unnecessary chance."

—From the PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM
Page One

THE Pronghorn Book of Wisdom, which is written for all pronghorn antelopes to read, is a part of the great Book of the Plains, because the pronghorn belongs not to hills or forests, but to the level prairie. His book of wisdom is in a language the wisest scholar of the greatest human university cannot read: hoofmarks at water holes compose its pages—and curious signs left where the grass is thin. There is, in the book, a telegraph code which grown-ups of the pronghorn tribe must know; but the things learned by the babies are simple, maxims to be taught in the first few days by wise and patient pronghorn mothers.

Page one of the long book has the maxims every baby antelope must get by heart before he runs alone.

It was on a hot, bright morning late in the spring, that a new baby antelope found himself alone on a strip of level land in southern Colorado. There were many flowers in bloom, the purple jack-bean, the lovely false mallow, which has an orange cup, and the cactus, white, crimson, and gold. But where the baby lay was only bunch-grass, pale brown, faintly tinged with green. The yellow earth, appearing through this sparse growth, blurred the whole face of the prairie to a dun color, almost exactly like an antelope's coat.

It would seem that the loving pronghorn mother might have selected a flowery cradle for her darling; or, at least, a place could have been found where his tiny body would have been protected from the sun. It beat fiercely on him. Above, through the light-blue sky of the Great Plains, went darts of light, like bayonets. Near the little antelope, the fragment of a glass bottle flamed as a miniature sun. There was no relief from the glare, except as now and then the shadow of a light cloud would skim the surface of the earth.

A butte, or low hill, cast a pleasant shade near the new baby, but he did not move toward it. He had learned the first bit of wisdom contained in the pronghorn book; and that is, NEVER TAKE AN UNNECESSARY CHANCE. He did not know whether to move or not—so, to move was to take a chance. He lay still.

Presently there appeared, skimming the plain, a shadow which was smaller and heavier than the clouds—an eagle was out in search of defenseless young creatures on the plains. She sailed slowly above the level strip where a number of antelope mothers had placed their young, and for a moment she paused above the new baby.

Seen from above, he was a patch of dull yellow on a dull yellow prairie—but she thought she detected a slight difference in color.

Like all her kind, the eagle had wonderful eyesight; but it was clearest, when she looked into the shadow. Where the butte gave a shade, she could distinguish even the pebbles against the earth, but the sun on the open plains blurred everything to a yellow wash of color. Besides, it dazzled her as she continued to look, so that she could no longer make out that patch she had seen at first and which had looked to her exactly

like a young antelope. She gazed awhile, hoping to see some movement on that stretch of prairie, then flew off to a lake, where she hoped to get a breakfast of fish, snatched from the blue belted kingfisher. Since the new baby had not ventured to lift his head, he saw only her outline on the earth; but he did not like that dark, winged shadow, swift as a storm cloud on the face of the prairie—and he was glad when it was gone. It was not until long afterward that he was to understand the reason why little antelopes must always be quiet when by themselves.

Soon after the eagle had gone, the new baby began to wish very much that his mother would return. In the first place, he was afraid, without her—as the babyhood of the pronghorn is a time of many enemies. When these creatures get their wonderful, fleet legs, and the eyes that can see for many miles across the prairie, they can take care of themselves remarkably well.

A long while passed. It was very hot on the prairie, and the new baby was thirsty. So were the other little antelopes, stretched here and there on the bunch-grass. But they all lay as flat as hearth-rugs—not one, as the sun mounted to the

zenith, moved a hair of his fawn-colored coat. Nearly all the other little antelopes were twins, and it is possible that the brothers and sisters comforted one another somewhat in the absence of their mothers; but even twin antelopes do not lie very close together; and the new baby was far from all others.

Now and then a big range cow passed within a few feet of him. The cows, too, have their nurseries; but when they leave their calves alone two or three mothers usually stay on guard over all the youngsters, so that no enemy of young creatures dares to molest the calves. It is not because the pronghorn has never thought of this, that she does not follow some such plan; for these animals are so clever there is almost nothing which concerns their own lives that they do not know about. But the cows do not have to get their own living entirely; their owners feed them during the winter; they are fat and strong when the calves are born, and can spare a little time for nursery duty. Every pronghorn mother has to earn her own living and her baby's. To pick enough food from the dry prairies she must be

busy all day long. So, with the breaking of day she steals away to gather her food; and if she has not plenty, of course there can be no milk for the little one. Nobody helps pronghorns to get food; and the mother must work as hard as do some human mothers who go out from their homes to wash and scrub for wages.

Now something occurred at a long distance from the antelope nursery, and it was right upon the horizon, so the new baby could see it without lifting his head. There was a curious flash as of light—it might have been the searchlamp of an automobile, but no motorist could possibly bring his car across country to that wild place. The flash was a signal of the antelope. This sign is part of the telegraph code which all their grown-ups seem to use with great ease, but which men cannot learn to understand. Some of the students of animal life say the antelope means "Danger," when he signals in that way; others, equally clever and well informed, think he is telegraphing to friends, to say, "Come and join our crowd." The signal is made when the grown antelope lifts those white hairs which may be seen just above his hind legs; and when the

prairie sun is shining, this showing of white is almost exactly like an electric flash.

The new baby had not yet come to the Code—which is well along in the pronghorn book. He paid no heed to the signal. It was now ten o'clock in the morning, past the hour for the antelope mothers to come stealing along that ridge of a butte which rose on his right side, to feed their babies. The nearest twins had just been fed and the new baby was very hungry.

A foolish idea came to him. His legs, though a bit shaky, felt strong enough to carry him a short distance. Perhaps his mother had forgotten about him; possibly, if he were to go and look for her, he would find her just on the other side of the butte. Why not try the plan?

Never take an unnecessary chance is a maxim which may be restated, "When not sure what to do, lie still." The new baby, obedient to all he knew of the pronghorn book, did not totter away to look for his mother—he lay quiet.

The sun climbed toward the zenith. He felt so hungry, now, he wanted to cry; but little pronghorns must not wail when hungry—an enemy might hear what they try to tell their mothers. Of course it would be a terrible thing

if an antelope mother forgot her baby, since in all the world no other creature loves him enough to feed and protect him. So it was with a desolate heart, and hunger gnawing at his stomach, that the new baby waited—and waited.

Had she forgotten? Why didn't she come?

CHAPTER II

Your mother will probably know what to do.

—PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM

Page One

THERE lived, in the same range of prairie where baby antelopes were cradled that spring, a cunning and powerful wolf. The rangers were unable to take him in their traps, and he would not touch their poison. For a time he preyed on the herds of the cattlemen; but when he saw that the rangers were keeping an especial watch on the cattle, he turned his attention to the hunting of young wild creatures. Every wild mother knew about Scarface—for that was the name given the wolf by a ranger who had caught sight of him. He was a huge, gray brute, whose face wore a curious expression, as of amusement. It was not a real smile, of course, but caused by a scar which the horns of a cow had given him, years before, as he was attempting to sneak upon her calf. Scarface was captain of a band of eight, and the other wolves of the gang were as cruel as he himself and only a trifle less clever.

They constantly scoured the region for food—cottontails, jack-rabbits, young antelopes—and in another year, when their puppies grew up in the dens of the rocks, the band would certainly number twenty. The wise old antelopes had many misgivings about the future.

Now the mother of the new baby had attracted Scarface's attention. In some way—for he was cunning in planning his attacks—he had guessed that she had hidden a kid somewhere, and he knew she would be wanting to visit it. He may have known by the breathless, uneasy way in which she would turn her head and draw in her breath at the mere sight of a wolf. He knew a fully grown antelope would not be so fearful—she must be afraid for her young one. From the hour he guessed her secret, Scarface dogged her steps. She was a beautiful young creature, with the wise head of a goat and the legs of a deer, and when Scarface approached her she would leap and skim away like the wind.

He did not care to follow her, but would lie down behind a cactus and watch until she returned. After each chase she would come tip-toeing softly across a ridge of ground, turning her pretty head to scan the prairie before ven-

turing near her darling. But she always saw the wolf behind his sheltering bush, and always turned away from the nursery, pretending to enjoy the bunch-grass.

She did not really feel like eating—for she knew her new baby must be suffering from hunger. Her whole body quivered; she could hardly keep herself from rushing to him.

To add to her anxiety, the atmosphere of the plain had grown dim and blue and there was a strong smell of smoke: arroyos filled with last year's tumbleweed were burning out, toward the south. If the fire spread, the antelope mothers must move their children; and if she did not feed her new baby, he would be too weak to follow her from the fire. Now and then she would glance hopefully at Scarface; but the old wolf did not tire of his quest—his grinning countenance, with the long, sharp nose, was to be seen at every turn she made.

It was mid-afternoon and her darling was still hungry. Suddenly, with a shake of her wise goat's head, as if she could bear the strain no longer, she turned toward the great flat north of the ridge. Now and then, as she went, she would turn her head to see whether she was followed;

and Scarface, chuckling, no doubt, to himself, was careful to remain out of sight behind rocks and bushes. It would be his part to find the nursery, then to wait patiently till she had fed the kid and left it.

Peering around a rock, he saw where she lay on the grass—no doubt the kid was just beyond her body. Scarface stretched himself on the earth, his nose resting upon his paws.

Twenty minutes passed. The wolf watched while the pretty mother rose from her place on the ground and tiptoed away. Then he slipped from his hiding-place. But when he reached the spot at which he had seen her resting, old Scarface halted in surprise.

The grass was warm from her body; and he felt sure, from what he had observed, that she had been keeping her kid in this spot. But no new baby was in sight. How could she have taken it away with her, unseen by the old wolf's watchful eyes?

She must have concealed it somewhere. Sniffing, and uttering an occasional low growl, Scarface looked for the hiding-place. He looked so long that the sun sank low in the west and the buttes threw long shadows like fingers pointing

eastward; and not once did he suspect an antelope trick. The wise mother had never laid her baby in this place; she would have been silly to have done so, as it was covered with plants and bushes among which a baby antelope's coat would be conspicuous to the eagles. Somewhere, over the crest of the ridge, up another and down again, out on the dull yellow level, the mother was stealing toward her kid. But Scarface made no farther effort to trail her. When he finally abandoned the effort to find the hiding-place of the new baby, he trotted away to join his band for the night's hunting.

CHAPTER III

Always take a chance when a chance is the only way out.

—PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM
Page Two

AS THE evening approached, the hungry little pronghorn out on the prairie began to shudder with cold and weakness—nights are cold on the Great Plains, after the burning days. The sun had set when he heard steps along the ridge of the butte near him, and a pebble rolled down its side. But he did not lift his head to see the beautiful animal tiptoeing toward him.

Her coat, in the sunset light, looked the dull yellow of chamois skin, with here and there soft tufts of white. Her eyes were large and dark, but not shy like a deer's, or soft; they were shrewd eyes, and saw far across the prairie. She drew near the new baby and made a low, tender sound.

He had been resting almost as flat as a door mat; it might have been a dead kid lying there on the earth; but at the sound of his mother's voice his eyes appeared, as bright as hers, and he

made a little sound of joy. His mother crooned to him, still very softly, and whatever she may have said in her language, it meant something like this: "I am here, little darling; you are safe now."

Joyfully the new baby nestled against his mother. It was perhaps as well he had no twin brother to share that supper of warm milk, for he was very hungry. Moreover, he was to need all the strength he could muster—to-morrow. The smoke haze had thickened, and here and there in the dusk could be seen little patches of blazing weeds. He did not think of to-morrow; he was perfectly satisfied when his mother was at home. Probably he thought there was no creature in the world against which she could not defend him, and no difficulty out of which she could not make a way.

Close upon sunset came the afterglow.—Then the prairie looked bright gold and the sky indigo, and where smoke was in the air the blue appeared just above the yellow. The afterglow faded, and it was night—but what baby is afraid of the dark if he sleeps beside his mother?

It was scarcely light when all the antelope mothers prepared to leave this level stretch they

had taken as a nursery. Family after family went, until not a kid was left except the new baby. The smoke was dense now, burning through the thick shrubbery in an arroyo close by. Fires on the Great Plains burn rapidly, dying out when a spot bare of herbage is reached; but the wind will always carry a spark to a place where it finds fuel. In the mountains, wild creatures run for the rivers when a fire is started among the trees; but on the plains, the safest place is some vast bed of sand. And so, as dawn broke, the new baby's mother urged him to follow her to the great barren flat on the north.

His long, thin legs were somewhat shaky, and bent outward when he tried to run beside his mother, so that he looked not unlike the animals children make with corks and pins. But his mother, the fleetest creature on the prairie, suited her pace to his, and he was much happier, following her, than when he had to lie alone in the sun.

All day they traveled on the hot and smoky plain, making what antelopes would call slow progress. At noon the legs of the kid failed, so that they had to rest a long while near a water-

hole. Here, the mother picked what grass she could before they had to be out and away again.

As evening approached she grew very uneasy, and constantly turned her head from side to side to scan the prairie. For it is with the approach of darkness that the wolves gather in bands and do what even Scarface could not accomplish alone. The wolves know perfectly that no pronghorn mother will desert her little one. When she is attacked by a pack, the old pronghorn, who could easily make her escape, will stand and fight until she is killed with her kid. And the mother of the new baby felt very weak and helpless—for she could not think of running away, to save herself. She did not sniff the wind, as deer do, for the wolf scent, but depended on the wonderful eyesight of prairie creatures. Such animals as deer, which get their living along the forested banks of mountain rivers, and hide in copsy places from their enemies, are near-sighted, but have keen ears and noses. The antelope's eyes extend out from the head in a curious way, almost like opera glasses. And they have a way of rolling over the prairie, to take in the entire landscape. She saw no creeping gray shadows, only the blue smoke of prairie fires, blown be-

fore the wind, toward her. When the sun set, some seep-water, in an arroyo, grew pink as an evening cloud, and the pronghorns went down to it. The wise mother did not suspect that a gray brute with a pointed nose looked from behind a rock while she drank.

When the mother and fawn left the place and turned eastward, the wolf also trotted from behind his cover; and as he turned his nose for a sniff of the wind, the scar across it could be distinctly seen.

He trotted to a high ridge of ground, from which he could send the pack cry across the prairie to his wolves. Seven gray wolves and one renegade dog, a runaway from a ranch, would hear his cry and answer it from every quarter of the prairie. But Scarface delayed, before summoning his gang, for the dusk to deepen.

Mother and kid trotted slowly toward the barren flat which lay in the west. The sun went down, and in that strange and lovely light called "afterglow" every cactus bush grew purple on the orange-colored earth. Night hawks screamed overhead. In a prairie-dog town the little citizens were going to bed. One barked from the

door of his house, and bobbed away. Then all was still.

Suddenly the pronghorn mother halted. Over the prairie came the rasping pack yell of a wolf. It was answered from all directions, in a slightly different tone, as if each member of the gang yelled back, "Here I am, Captain." Rolling her eyes across the prairie, the mother could soon see that evil shadows were slipping from cactus to yucca, from yucca to shadowing rock. The robber pack would surround her if they could. And the fawn beside her was very tired—he could never hope to outrun the wolves. She stood for a moment, thinking; for there is just this difference between the pronghorn and many other creatures of the plains and woods—when in danger, the pronghorn thinks before it runs.

The new baby watched her in wonder, for until now he had not doubted the perfect wisdom of the second maxim in his book—"Your mother will know what to do." Now he saw her hesitate; then he heard the yell of Scarface to his band, and, though he did not understand this, it frightened him so that he whimpered and ran between his mother's legs.

There was no time to reach the barren flat, on

which, that night, was a herd of antelope with whom mother and kid might have found shelter. But only a few yards from the place where she had stood when she first heard the wolves was something which offered at least a chance of safety.

The cactus is the greatest friend of harmless wild creatures. The thorns of this plant are exceedingly painful when they get into the flesh; but the wolf fears even a slight disablement more than pain. He is a pack animal. Pack animals join forces when they want to kill or plunder, but they are not friends, like many of the herd creatures. Wolves are sometimes more cruel to one another than to rabbits or antelopes; if one of the robber gang which tried to surround the pronghorns should be disabled, the others might turn against him and tear him to pieces. Even their captain, Old Scarface, might be cruelly treated by his band, so these wolves took no chance of getting sore feet from cactus thorns.

The small, sharp hoofs of the pronghorn are almost proof against thorns, and these creatures always look about, when brought to bay by wolves, for a cactus patch, as a kind of fortress to defend. When the mother of the new baby

saw a large patch of the prickly-pear variety, gay with blossoms, sharp with thorns, she ran that way, leaped into the center of the bed, and gave a soft call to her kid. After a few attempts he was able to follow her.

Now she stood at bay; her eyes seemed red and wild, as the moon rose over a butte to the east, her nostrils widened savagely, her hard, goat's nose looked almost as sharp as Scarface's. Her horns were smaller than those of the male pronghorn, but she had two weapons for fighting—her hard forehead, and those sharp hoofs, which are, after all, the pronghorn's best defense.

Now cactus seldom grows in a thick mat through which a wolf cannot pick his way. In this place the mother had found for herself were many weak spots, so that the safety of the two defenders would depend on her vigilance in wheeling to attack the enemy as fast as he tried to sneak through the thorny patch.

She knew there was a bitter fight before her; but as the wolves appeared, running from four directions at once, she spoke to her kid in a low, tender voice that greatly comforted him. Then she turned to meet Scarface. The cactus was only a chance—but she had taken it.

CHAPTER IV

When desperate, take a risk.

—FROM THE PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM

THIS maxim is too far along in the book for so young a kid as the new baby. But there are times when the wise pronghorn mother and teacher cannot wait for all the lessons to be learned in order. When the mother turned to face Scarface the wolf, while her baby stood trembling at her heels, several pages had been turned in his primer. This was a hard lesson for him, and he did not understand.

The pronghorn mother lowered her head, and the old wolf snarled and retreated. Perhaps he remembered what a range cow had done to his nose, long before, when he was a pup. When a wild mother is made desperate, her tormentor must take the consequences. Scarface doubled backward quickly, and was out of her reach.

Now none of the wolf band wanted to be hurt, for they knew perfectly how the rest of the gang treated wounded wolves. They could not well sneak behind the mother pronghorn, as the cactus

there grew very thick, and they could not reach the kid between her hind legs. They withdrew, and for a few moments put their wits together in conference.

Altogether the safest plan for them was to frighten the young one from his refuge. If he could be induced to run for his life, his mother would follow him, and then the wolf band would have no trouble, and none of them would be hurt. They began a frightful yapping, and scampered from side to side of the cactus patch. Their yells were the shrill ones with which the wolf cries "Triumph!"—when he is right upon the game. A calf or lamb would no doubt have taken to its little heels in despair; but the pronghorn, because it is wild, obeys its book much better. It is almost impossible to frighten one of these little creatures away from its mother. Rocky buttes, rising about the battle ground, caught and echoed the yells of the enemy, till every rabbit on the range was shivering in its hiding-place; still that kid remained between its mother's heels. When noise failed to frighten him from his position, the wolves tried their eyes—which are dreadful to anyone. They sat down on their haunches and glared at him, but he did not move.

Now they all lay in a semicircle around the cactus patch. They could have rushed upon the fortress and beaten down the defense of the little mother, but it is the weakness of the wolf that he always saves his own skin. Wolves take few risks except for mates or young. They now depended on what they knew about little antelopes, to get what they wanted without danger to themselves. The strength of the baby legs would soon fail, and the kid, really too small to travel, could not lie down in a cactus patch; his mother would have to take him away.

She could feel, as the kid shivered between her legs, how tired he was; and she knew—for a pronghorn is always sensible—something would have to be tried which she had not done before, in all the varied experiences of her life. Slowly turning herself about, she scanned the prairie. Scarface and his band lay still and watched her, their tongues lolling, their teeth white by the rising moon.

She and the kid had come to a point from which the fire no longer menaced them greatly. Twenty feet on their right was a ford of the Purgatoire River, and on the other side of the



"THE OLD WOLF SNARLED AND RETREATED"

stream the burned-over land was black, but cool, with only a little smoke drifting across it.

Against the top of a butte the mother saw one red tongue of flame—the backfire of government fire-fighters, who had been working hard that day to protect the homesteads. Now, of all creatures that ever come to the prairie, the pronghorn seems to be most afraid of man. If a band of antelopes are feeding on the plains, the scent of a wagon-train or of cowboys on the round-up, a mile away, will send them flying from their pasture, flashing their danger signals from point to point.

Scarface grinned. He and his band were afraid of men, but he knew the pronghorn was more so.

In turning, the poor mother left that weak place in the cactus fence unguarded. Scarface leaped that way, and she wheeled to do battle. With her front hoofs she struck him in the stomach, so that he rolled backward, legs in the air and howling with pain.

Next, the remaining wolves were surprised by what the obedient little kid suddenly decided to do. He leaped from the cactus and trotted away over the prairie.

His mother had given him the command to do this. An instant later she was running at his side. All the pack followed, except the captain. Scarface was taking no risks, but had limped off behind a bush, and lay licking the ugly bruise the pronghorn hoofs had made. The wolves spread themselves in a semicircle, to intercept the flight of the mother and kid to the river.

She had no notion of making for the Purgatoire. She struck boldly toward the camp lights of the government fire-fighters. The triumphant yells of the wolves turned to shrieks of indignation as they rushed in front of her, snapping at her heels and at the kid. But two men heard and ran out of the camp. Guns were fired. And when a prairie wolf hears a gun he always dives for cover. Behind bushes, into holes of the rock, Scarface's entire band soon disappeared from sight.

The new baby had fallen exhausted on the prairie, and his mother caressed him with her nose and tongue. Her eyes shone red in the light of the camp fire.

She did not feel that they were safe here; she made the kid get upon his feet, and guided him, stumbling as he went, toward the camp. Just

how she had known this was a chance to be taken, one cannot say. The fire-fighters were amazed when she walked into their camp with a worn-out kid staggering between her legs.

Her large, black eyes rolled from face to face of the men; she was in a terrible fright. One of the fire-fighters approached her and would have laid his hand on the kid. She shook her head menacingly, and he laughed and drew his hand away.

The chance she had taken was a good one; not a man in the camp would have harmed, for anything, the pretty creature who trusted them. "Well, old lady," asked one, "what is it you want? Supper, or just free lodging?"

She would not touch the food which was offered her. Indeed, it seemed to make her uneasy, and she retreated backward, calling softly to her kid to follow her. But she did not take him far from the camp; he was much too tired to cope with the wolves again that night. Outside the circle of firelight she lay down to rest; and the new baby snuggled beside her.

With the first gray of dawn she was awake, restless and uneasy. The men were asleep in their blankets, the horses, with front legs carefully

hobbled, cropped bunch-grass close to camp. In the faint light horned larks were out, ranging the prairie in search of food. The pronghorn mother tiptoed away with her kid.

As they crossed the Purgatoire, red was coming into the sky and touching the surface of the water. They picked their way across black, burned earth, and came to the top of a hill, while the mother looked warily from side to side for any sign of Scarface's band.

Far away, in a green spot on the prairie, some animal lifted its head. The sun was rising now, and the new baby saw the signal, like an electric lamp, flash here and there on the level. His mother had sighted her own band of antelope—the one with which she had spent the previous winter.

They seemed wonderful beings to the new baby, as now he made his way among them, with their powerful heads and bright eyes and the deep, rolling sound of their voices and their way of tossing their heads and of stamping their sharp hoofs. Pronghorns are kind to the young. The leader of the band—a wise old doe who had ruled the others for many years—looked him over and seemed to think he was a very creditable

youngster. As for the new baby, he felt safe and happy—as herd animals always do when they can get with a number of their own kind. He knew, without being told, that this band would have ways of outwitting the wolves; his perilous infancy was over. From now on he would eat and grow and thrive. But he felt just a little shy of all these grown-ups; he hung his head and hid between his mother's legs.

CHAPTER V

When in doubt about a thing, let it alone.

—PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM
Part Two (New edition)

IN THE past fifty years some maxims of the pronghorn book have been changed. There was a time when the wisest of the tribe believed that it was best to investigate every strange thing. They never behaved as do the bobcats, who have not wit enough to learn a new thing, and so merely turn their tails at sight of a strange object, run for a black canyon, and stay there. Many years ago the pronghorn thrived by using its keen eyes in investigation. To be sure, the Indian arrow sometimes found it as it tiptoed toward some curiously flapping skin that had attracted its attention. But Indians never killed more than they needed for meat, and treated the antelope as the sheep-owner does his flocks. Suddenly, on the pleasant, open prairie, the white man appeared. He used to tempt the pronghorn near his camp by hanging out white sheets and raising flags, and the wisest creature on the plains easily

fell into this trap. Their book said, "Investigate, and then you will know what to do." Of course they never came very near the curious sheet or flag, but depended on their wonderful swiftness to escape if their eyes warned them of danger.

But the white man had a way of making a great noise, suddenly. Whenever he did so, some creature dropped dead or wounded; there would be a smell of powder in the air of the plains. The antelopes did not know how his magical trick was done, but they soon learned that they could not hope to escape its power. He did not stop with one animal for meat, but his gun would bark again and again, and at each noise a pronghorn would drop dead or mortally hurt. When there is a noise which kills, they decided, it is best to keep far away. And the maxim of the early pronghorn book was changed—

WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A THING LET IT ALONE. This precept is hard for young pronghorns to learn, and they are forever getting, instead, that old one, which has really been blurred out of their book.

The kid which had come out of the fire had so much curiosity he may as well be called here, "Paul Pry." From the hour he joined the herd

with his mother he grew rapidly, till he was nimble and strong and seemed more than his age. His mother remained kind, but gave him less attention, and when he was able to eat bunch-grass for himself he asked no advice from her, but ran about where he chose. Only a few weeks after he was born, his baby horns came—hard knots on the head, which grow on young prong-horns like milk teeth, and drop off later. To have horns made Paul feel still more independent, so that he constantly strayed from the herd.

But during his childhood nothing very exciting happened to him. He was well protected in the herd, which Scarface did not trouble.

There came a time of burning weather on the plains. Purple jack-bean and orange mallow had dropped off, leaving their hard, dry seed vessels. The fruit grew and reddened on the prickly pear. Birds, nesting in the cactus for fear of snakes, used to spread their wings all day above their nests, fanning the eggs to cool them. Heat had dried up the water-holes, around which the earth cracked like old glue, with the hoofmarks of weeks before remaining in it.

The antelopes went to drink at a river near the

foothills; for though they belong to the plains and can endure thirst remarkably well, they much prefer at least a daily drink.

It was on these journeys to the river that little Paul began to disobey the newer precept of the book, for here the pronghorns, who love best a lonely and desolate prairie, came near to human beings with their amazing and interesting ways.

In the dawn of one summer morning, as they were stealing away from the water, Paul beheld a strange sight. A tent was pitched close to the bank, with its flap open, and the wind blowing in to rumple some blankets on a cot. All was still about the place. Behind it the east grew pink as a wild rose, and in an ancient cottonwood a little bird with a pink throat was singing his finch song. At sight of the tent most of the pronghorn herd had made away; they could now be seen flashing over the horizon. But Paul went tiptoeing to the rear.

The tent looked harmless to him, but what he now saw filled his heart with fear. On a rope between two limbs were several blue cotton shirts. The wind puffed out their sleeves, giving them a very savage appearance, and while Paul stood gazing, all together made a lunge at him.

He leaped high in air and was off. When, later, he rejoined the herd he was still trembling; and all day long, when he remembered those blue shirts, he gave a little gasp of fear, for he was sure he had made, that morning, the narrowest escape of his life.

But he did not lose his taste for investigation. The herd of which he was a member selected as their drinking place another portion of the river, which was near a large cattle ranch. They came to this point in the gray of each morning, drank, and stole away.

One day little Paul again ventured from the herd. As he strayed along the river bank he saw no savage blue shirts puffing themselves large with rage, or lunging at him from their line. But presently he came to an inclosure at the end of which was a new metal rack.

The east was now growing bright and the galvanized iron gleamed so in the light that he could not help going in through the gate to see what it might be which sparkled. There was a smell of cattle, and the ground was covered with hay which they had pulled from that shining rack. Paul moved forward, with his head turned to one side, his bright eyes intent on the metal.

Suddenly he leaped and was off by the way he had come. A man in a blue shirt had entered the cattle pen.

Paul bent his legs at the knees for a leap, but the gate by which he had entered swung suddenly shut. Shouts went up from men and boys who now came running toward the inclosure. The little pronghorn ran wildly from side to side of the pen; but its fence was high, and when he would have leaped over, the men rushed to drive him back.

At last one of them began to pursue him about the inclosure with a rope. Again and again the noose fell on his back; again and again he managed to escape it. But in the end—for men always get what they want from animals—the rope tautened about his little body and he was a prisoner. He kicked savagely and tried to use his baby forehead like a goat, but was thrown on one side and made fast with the rope.

Thus he lay still and anyone would have supposed he was dead. The wind which blew from the prairie brought a scent of sagebrush and dried flowers; he moaned a little and tried to lift his head. Far away, on a butte, the herd flashed its signal.

After a time some children came, bringing bread and sugar; but he started in terror when the strange food touched his nose. He would not have eaten, then, even the sage-scented grass which he loved. They patted his head and called him "a little beauty." And when they were afraid of him their father said, "It's a young one; it won't hurt you"; so he had to feel once more the touch of their hateful hands.

All that night he remained tied with ropes, and would not eat, or touch the water they brought him. In the morning, men came and forced him into a kind of crate or cage. The ropes which they took from his legs left welts that hurt. But in his terror of what might be yet to come, the little buck did not think about his pain. The crate was placed on a large open truck and he was taken to a railroad station.

Now came an awful experience. A monster rushed shrieking into the station. Clouds of steam rose from it and it smelled like a gun. Its shriek was like a million bobcats at once. Flame and red sparks flew about it. And the men lifted Paul Pry's crate.

Were they about to feed him to this monster?

They pushed and poked the crate into its maw—which was, after all, nothing but a baggage car, in which a number of trunks and boxes stood about. And all the baggage men came to look.

“What’s that?” shouted one.

“A young pronghorn buck,” replied the rancher who had made Paul a prisoner. “He came right into my corral yesterday. I wired to the city and they’d like to have him for the park zoo.”

The baggage men now brought things which they imagined Paul Pry would like to eat—peanuts, a banana, half an apple. These offerings lay untouched on the floor of his crate.

A shudder ran through his little, wild body. With another shriek from the engine, the ringing of a bell and a gush of smoke, the train was off for the city. Through the open door of the baggage car he saw the gray-green level on which he had been born. Among those low hills, purple as smoke in the distance, the herds of the pronghorn lay down to rest at noon. Over the plains they went like the wind, and gave the wolves the slip, at night, and fell asleep under velvet skies with the great white stars of the West.

Was the old wild life forever done, for him?
Would he never again stretch his limbs over a
hundred miles of prairie, or taste the sage and the
water-hole, or catch the signals of his kind,
flashed from hill to hill?

CHAPTER VI

Beware of Watered Grass.

—From that chapter of the PRONGHORN BOOK, which all the tribe must obey—or die.

ELM leaves cast a flicker of shade over a green paddock in a city park. In one place was a shed for protection from storms. A fence of netting, eight feet high, made escape impossible, yet allowed people who came and went to see the imprisoned animals. In one corner a pronghorn buck somewhat more than a year old was dying; and at the farther side, separated from the sick buck by a cross netting, stood little Paul Pry.

For three days Paul had tasted no food; and now, when the keepers tossed him an armful of newly cut grass and clover, he shuddered and walked away. Pronghorns cannot live without their native food of the arid plains. They may take a few mouthfuls, now and then, of blue-grass or growing grain; and in the autumn they have been known to break into the standing crops on the ranches, trample them and taste, but the sage-scented grass is their life. After days of

starving in captivity, they are usually brought to eat what is given them. Paul Pry would be starved to it, by and by, just as the other buck had been, months before; then he too would die of a painful sickness.

Two or three sight-seers came near his fence, thrust their hands in, and talked to him softly; he retreated as far as he could, but when he reached the opposite netting, he backed against other park tourists who almost touched him with their hands. Some one shouted: "Look at the pronghorn!"—and he ran, to get away, to the center of his paddock, where he stood shivering.

His legs trembled from the weakness of hunger, and yet, for homesickness, he scarcely knew that he was hungry. He sank on the grass and, with all the strange people staring at him, hid his eyes and lay still.

Not far away was the cage of a mountain lion, which had been walking up and down for two years, trying to find a door open. The little pronghorn did no such foolish thing—he felt there was no door, he was a prisoner here forever.

A steam whistle near the park announced the close of the working day in the city. A little afterward, as the sun was setting, Paul Pry heard



C. V. GAUDES

"ALL THAT DAY AND NIGHT HE REMAINED TIED WITH ROPES"

a sound which made him start and lift his head. For an instant he thought he was at home again. But the long-drawn howl had come from a wolf that was a captive like himself in the park. Other wolves took up the howl, pointed their noses toward the sky, and dreamed of the open prairie. The little pronghorn listened, and when they were silent he lay down again.

It grew dark rapidly that night and there were signs of a great storm in the sky. A keeper came, with his electric flashlamp, drove little Paul Pry into his shed, and shut the door. "We're going to have lightning," he remarked to a tourist, "and the storms we get around the equinox are killers, sometimes." Then he added, "That little buck's going to die anyhow; he's breaking his heart."

Paul Pry hated the shed, and as soon as the keeper had gone he succeeded in forcing its door. When he stepped into the open paddock he could hear the roar of a great cold wind which brought rain. The lightning made everything bright as day for a moment. Then a dense black night descended—the arc-lamps of the town were out. Nobody crossed the park to see what the little new buck might be doing. He dashed from end to end of the paddock, trying to get shelter from

the storm, but would not go into that shed which smelled of human beings.

A large old tree, rotten in the heart, swayed back and forth when the wind tore at its roots. And by and by everyone near the park was startled by a great noise—the old cottonwood had fallen.

Its upper boughs crashed upon the wire fence which surrounded that paddock they had labeled, "American Pronghorn Antelope." It carried a section of fence to the earth, and little Paul saw this in a white flash of lightning.

With a bound he was out of the paddock. He fled through the playground, frightened as he ran under the children's swings and was whacked by the board seats. He circled the cages where mountain lions were growling at the storm—remembering other lightning, on the tops of the Rockies. He ran away where the park lake lay frothing with rain, then he emerged to an asphalted street.

Terrified, but with hope in his heart, he took his way where the wind brought a scent of sagebrush in the rain. And now, as he drew near the city limits, some dog got the scent of wild game.

He summoned another, a big Airedale from a truck garden. A bull-pup heard and jumped

the fence which inclosed his master's premises. Three mongrels without collars joined in the chase—all eager to assist in returning the prisoner to jail.

The yapping and yelling of eager dogs brought all the people in that end of town to their windows. A lightning flash revealed the little pronghorn, where he stood—thinking before his run for liberty—on the city dump. A dozen dogs rushed at him; but he was no tame sheep, to be pulled down by them. A leap carried him over the heads of the nearest; he cleared a ditch, running thick with mud—and was off.

Doubling his little legs under him, he leaped the tracks of the inter-urban railroad—for pronghorns are in deadly fear of iron. It may be that some of their number have been killed by the lightning which runs along the barbed fences and is so fatal to cattle on the plains. Little Paul Pry took no chances with fence or railroad.

Beyond the tracks, he could feel the cactus crunched by his hoofs, and there was a good smell of asters and sage; but dogs rushed from a ranch house, and he turned southward to cross a stretch of weed-grown prairie. The rain ceased falling. He had left the last dog far behind, but he dared

not slacken his speed. A pronghorn has been known to out-distance a locomotive when running beside its track.

When at last the dawn came, the little buck found himself in open country. He saw no fences, he heard no dogs, and his own good bunch-grass grew over the plain. He snatched a few mouthfuls and lay down to sleep; he waked and walked about, eating the herbage of the plain. Then, for pure joy of motion, he leaped, and skimmed the plain like a bird. If there had been anyone near to see he must have thought those little hoofs did not touch the ground.

Pausing to rest and eat, he traveled steadily toward the south and east, where he could see a line of low, smoke-colored hills. He felt lonely, unhappy, and afraid. Were there no antelopes in the world except himself?

Even the wild taste of the bunch-grass, for which he had so longed while in prison, did not please him. And at night, when he heard the coyotes as he lay flat on the prairie, he would shudder with terror.

After many days of wandering he found himself not far from the Spanish Peaks, in the southern part of the state of Colorado. There was

something familiar about this landscape; the warm gray of the bunch-grass was gashed by blue and violet canyons in the distance. These colors indicate cedar, and cedar indicates the South. Paul pushed on in great excitement.

Suddenly he saw at a distance the flashing of an electric, white light. He was drawing near his own people again. In joy, he ran forward.

It was a great herd which had gathered here, near the Peaks, to rest and eat before the coming of cold weather. Almost all the pronghorns in that part of the state had joined it, and so, of course, Paul found many old friends. For the king and chief of the big herd was a brave old antelope to whose protection his mother had gone in the fall, after her battle with Scarface—his own father.

CHAPTER VII

Let that pronghorn be chief, who knows best how to rule.

—From the chapter on "Politics," of the PRONGHORN BOOK

PAUL PRY'S father was one of the great chiefs of the pronghorn tribe—old Solomon I. His beautiful dark eyes saw far beyond the horizon where to human eyes earth and sky seem to meet. In flight, he could distance the freight trains that crossed the prairie bound for California—but he did not fly when the does and young ones were in danger. A true chief, with the best right to rule, he thought of the safety of all. Often, as the herd traveled together, old Solomon would pause suddenly, his eyes glaring at something he saw in the sand. Then, with a leap forward, he would plant his hoofs on the head of a rattlesnake that lay coiled to spring and strike a kid. Sometimes a pronghorn who thus attacks a snake is struck in the leg, himself, but Old Solomon was too nimble for that. And he never lost any member of his herd by snake bite.

He was not only ruler, but teacher. He taught them how to kill their scent when flying

from wolves, and how the grown antelopes may guard the young ones against these robber gangs which hunt all the year across the prairie. When the weather was cold and snow covered the plains grass, he selected places among the low-lying southern buttes, where herbage could be found, to keep them alive. But he never let the herd go near a farm, to snatch grain, as some antelopes do, or to eat hay with the cattle. For the pronghorn to leave his old, wild ways, he thought, is death: or, it means the loss of liberty, which is worse. Some men will not kill, will even feed the wild things in winter—but how is a pronghorn to know?

One day, as the brave old chief kept watch over his herd, that which he had most feared sought him out.

It was in the lovely, early winter. A violet haze rested on the far-away prairie near the horizon. On the buttes close by, the shadows lay soft as fur. The shoulders of the hills were dimpled and they seemed to stretch forth mighty paws to protect the pronghorns that fed between them. The morning frost had melted on the plain, the sky was dark blue as an aster, and it was so still the breaking of a seed-vessel could be heard a

long way off. Horned larks, eating the weed seeds, raised their sweet, impatient little cry, "Oh, dee-ar! Oh, dee-ar!" and flew away.

They had heard footsteps a long way off on the prairie.

Eastward from the quietly feeding herd of pronghorns was a long, low butte the edge of which was fringed with the soft, yellowish grass and weeds of autumn. A man, flat on his face, crept over this ridge.

The old chief gave his herd the signal, "Fly!" Paul and the does and the youngsters, with three or four young bucks, slipped between two buttes and emerged, almost out of gunshot, where a hundred miles of prairie opened to the south. Then, lifting their feet clear of the ground, they were off. They seemed to skim like birds, scarcely touching the earth as they fled.

Some people say that an old pronghorn buck will face the hunters because he is curious to see them—but old Solomon was too wise for that. A noble figure, taller than any other pronghorn in the herd, he stood against the sky till all had made their escape except himself. Then he also turned to fly—but it was too late. A gun crashed on the top of the ridge which looked so soft with

its fringe of weeds. The old chief staggered once, as he ran—stumbled and fell.

Nobody will ever know, but anyone may guess, why he waited so long facing the hunter. The bunch he had ruled so well heard the sound of the gun and doubled their speed across the prairie. They ran until the young ones were tired and some of the weaker sobbed in breathing. Then they all stopped to wait for old Solomon to come and tell them where to go. But he never came.

This was in November, the time, between autumn and winter, when the herds of antelope gather on the plains. There were several young bucks in old Solomon's herd, but one was nimbler and wiser than the rest. Moreover, like his father, he had grown wiry and tall. He had the horns of the fully grown antelope. These are shed each autumn and grow rapidly, and his last pair had showed the prong which is the pride of the grown-up bucks. This young pronghorn buck was little Paul Pry.

But wild animals cannot keep the names we give them through life—they change too rapidly for that. Paul was no longer curious in matters which should not concern him; he was clever, prudent, and very learned in the wisdom of the

pronghorn book. And so there was no other pronghorn better fitted to take the old chief's place. He was Paul Pry no longer, but Solomon II, chief of the herd.

Solomon II had need, that winter, of all his wisdom. There had been a drought in the fall, so that bunch-grass was scant and poor; and before the first of December came a great snow-storm. After the blizzard, when the herbage of the plains lay under a foot of snow, the mercury dropped, in a bitter night, to thirty below. In the morning the breath of the pronghorns rose about them like steam from locomotives, and little birds, caught in the storm, tried to keep warm under the snow. The sky was bright blue, the earth a white glare in the sun. Every pool or water-hole lay under thick ice, which must be broken before the pronghorn herd could drink, and they had to paw away a foot of snow for a taste of frozen grass. Poor enough from the drought, the plains herbage was now scarcely sufficient to support life. Solomon II and his charges went from butte to butte, to all the sheltered places where his father had found grass in famine times. They worked all of every day, each for

his few mouthfuls of frozen grass, till they were all gaunt and hungry and the legs of the weaker ones trembled from famine.

But Solomon II did not lead them to a ranch or fenced pasture; he had learned that even when man tries to help the wild animals, he makes cruel mistakes because he does not understand.

Life grew harder for the antelope tribe. In January came a thaw, followed by bitter weather which caused a thick crust of ice to form on the snow. If the pronghorn tried to break this, he sank to the knees, and so was likely to fall an easy victim to the wolves. He was safe only on those barren flats to the south where the snowfall had been light. But here was no grass at all.

In and out among the hills Solomon went with his starving people. Avoiding those crusted places under which new grass was starting, protected by the snow, he let them pick what they could on the hills which had been swept clean by winds. Here he would stand guard against the wolves. And he always saw that there was a way open for flight to the barren flats.

One February morning, as he kept watch on the edge of the herd, his eyes, rolling over the prairie, caught the far-away gleam of a golden

dome above a large town. The state Capitol was in this place; and the Legislature was in session. Solomon was not interested in anything which concerned human beings—except in so far as he desired to keep as far from them as possible. He would have been much surprised to know the subject of the deliberations that day in the Capitol. It was almost noon when he saw that great, gold dome. And at noon, as the records of the Legislature show, the clerk wrote down in his book the words:

“An act was passed, to preserve from extinction, the Native American Pronghorn.”

But of course Solomon II could have comprehended that writing no more easily than the clerk of the Legislature could learn to read the pronghorn book. He shuddered with dislike at sight of the Capitol dome. Then his eyes rolled across the prairie from north to south, and he saw something he could understand.

Far on the north, across a vast stretch of prairie where bunch-grass grew well, the snow had been cleared away. Solomon tiptoed to the high shoulder of the hill; he looked again, and the glad news was true.

He lifted his pronged head and called his herd to follow him to pasture.

Solomon had no idea that men would care for him, or, if they did, could be wise enough to give the pronghorn his native food. Most men, when they try to help a wild animal, believe that they know very much better than the silly thing himself does, what he ought to have.

Perhaps it was well the young chief did not know that the Wild Life Club had sent snow-plows to clear his pasture in a place from which they could easily escape if wolves came. If he had, he might have been afraid to feed his herd in the place. His contacts with man had not inclined him to trust their advances; and that they should show kindness would have been a new and amazing idea to him.

In summer, and sometimes in winter, antelope herds are led by does.

CHAPTER VIII

When all is lost, and there is nothing left but surrender to the enemy, keep fighting. Something unlooked-for may happen.

—From the PRONGHORN BOOK OF WISDOM: a chapter to be studied by advanced pupils

ANYONE knows that the maxim which heads this chapter was not written for kids, but is the precept loved and followed by great chiefs of the tribe. It comes so far along in the book that some never reach it; and to those who do it often proves the end of the story.

Solomon II, who had once been little Paul Pry, and before that a new baby on the plains, had never forgotten his ancient enemies, the wolves. Now Scarface himself had been killed. Pack animals seldom live to be old, and with the first failing of his strength a younger wolf had taken his place. This new captain of the robber band had been born that very spring when the mother of Solomon II laid her new baby alone on the prairie. And when she fought the gang from her cactus patch the wolf pup had lain in a den of the rocks, waiting the return of his parents from the hunt. He had grown, since, into

a huge wolf with a heavy mane, and hind legs which looked weak and small by contrast. And so many little antelopes had become his victims that a very proper name for him would be "Captain Kid-eater"—for short, "Captain Kid."

With four big-maned wolves and a female or two, Captain Kid roved over the winter prairie. The wolves had increased so, this season, that most of the cottontails had taken themselves off to the rocks to hide, and the pack were hard pressed for food.

In the late afternoon of one February day they scented Solomon's herd of antelopes.

The pronghorns were quietly feeding where the snow had melted from a slope covered with grass. All about them were the horned larks, which are so fond of following the pronghorn that some people call them "Antelope birds." The sun was still bright; patches of snow on the hillsides looked blue as the sky, but part of the level was a great expanse of white, with still a crust of ice, like the glaze on a meringue pudding. At the edge of the herd Solomon II was feeding.

Some human kings have had the notion that people in high places ought to have the best of

everything, very easy lives, and body-guards to protect them. This idea never came from the pronghorns. Solomon II had scarcely the chance to eat, he was so constantly lifting his head to scan the prairie. But the wolves know perfectly well how far a pronghorn chief can see; they stole forward between the buttes, gray shadows that made no sound; and they saw to it that the wind blew right against their faces, so it could carry no scent to the game.

Solomon was first to spy the evil face of Captain Kid as it peered from behind a cactus clump. Immediately all the herd began to leap about in what seems at first glance to be a rather silly and aimless fashion of antelopes when danger appears. Perhaps it is their way to avoid leaving a trail for wolves to follow.

After jumping about in this way for some time, all the pronghorns but one danced away, running with the wind. When they were out of sight they lifted their feet, skimming the earth like birds, and were off.

The last of the herd remained for a moment behind the rest; this was Solomon II, the new chief. Now in some wild-animal herds the king, or leader, seems to think he has a right to get all

he can out of the others; he takes the best food and in time of danger will even run away, leaving the weaker ones to fight the enemy. The pronghorns expect their king to be of some use in return for the honor of ruling. So Solomon II did just what was expected of him.

It was rather a bad time for him to be trailed by wolves. On the very day his people were thus scented by Captain Kid, they had raced many miles before the Arkansas River gang, which had old Trap Wolf as their leader.

Solomon ran straight for the sand barrens. A little moon had just swung over the top of a ridge on his left. The bunch-grass over which he traveled was but slightly flecked with snow, and he saw before him a clear path between two buttes on the south.

Others of his band had felt tired, and some foolish does had stopped to rest near an arroyo. As the wolves approached, in their chase of Solomon, these leaped and skimmed away, but one, which was not fully grown, went very slowly, from fatigue. The Captain Kid band turned instantly to run her down. Solomon ran on.

Was he a coward, then—glad to make his own escape, while the murderous band fell upon one

of those who had trusted their lives to him? Unworthy son of old Solomon I!

But no! It presently began to seem that the young chief had twisted one of those swift, beautiful legs, the dependence of pronghorns for safety. He limped painfully and conspicuously; and when this attracted the attention of the wolves, it seemed to them he would be easier prey than the little doe. So immediately the whole band came at him.

He stumbled piteously. On a rise of ground he stopped as if at bay, shaking his head and stamping one foot, while Captain Kid yelled in derision. Still, the wolves were cautious, none of them wanted a sharp hoof in his stomach.

By this time the young doe had reached a safe place beyond the river. When Solomon II saw this he just curled under his belly those beautiful swift feet, and was off like a bird. Playing lame had been his sly trick on the wolves.

They had been fooled—as usual. There is a reason why wolves cannot grasp the idea of a pronghorn's adopting the pretense of lameness to save one of his band; they themselves would not think of such a thing. With wolves it is every animal for himself.

Now, as Solomon fled, and the wolves were hot on his trail, he found himself a trifle winded and felt that he must manage to reach a place of safety where he could rest. He shaped his course in the direction of the twin buttes—or low hills—which formed a kind of gateway to the barrens.

As he approached the buttes he chuckled to himself, for he felt that he had left his pursuers behind. But he was to discover that the famous Captain Kid was not stupid, after all. He had stationed two of his best wolves at the gateway, to intercept Solomon.

Fortunately the chief got a sight, in time, of their big-maned heads; he turned aside and struck across the prairie. An arroyo crossed his path; he doubled his legs and skimmed it like a bird.

The wolves have a trick—their best—which pronghorns never seem to learn. They set an animal they are chasing to running in a circle. Then they place wolves at different points in the big circle to leap out at the quarry, while the main pack keeps steadily at his heels. King Solomon II, with all his wisdom, did not understand this trick. When he came to a point, above the Purgatoire, at which a big dark wolf threatened him, he turned and ran, just as the wolf

wished, in a circle. It was not long before he began to realize, uneasily, that the enemy was hemming him about. He did not understand where so many wolves came from—always leaping out of the darkness, snapping at his heels. Did they spring from the prairie itself? If an antelope could study a leaf of the wolves' book, he would be much better able to take care of himself and his band; but most animals seem to know only their own.

The wolves had been working silently. As they found they were surrounding the chief, they gave vent to those excited yells which carry so far across the plain. At some ranch or camp the dogs heard and answered.

Solomon looked for a cactus bush, but could not find one. Finally he set his back to a ledge of rock and faced the enemy—as many a brave animal before him had done, only to be conquered in the end, and die. He shook his head and stamped his feet as if he were not in the least afraid. A pronghorn has such a gallant way of stamping that even when everything is against him the wolves feel somewhat inclined to fear that he has something up his sleeve, after all.

This was why Captain Kid and his band now delayed awhile.

Could anything be gained by fighting now? That advanced lesson of the pronghorn book told the brave chief to go on, even if he saw that all was lost. Solomon had earned it—and he would not yield. Selecting a mean little wolf, crawling along, belly to earth, he rammed his hoof into her. Though he did not succeed in hurting her much, she raised such a yell that the whole band retreated for a moment. Thus a little time was gained for Solomon II.

He waited. His flashing eyes and the vicious stamp of his foot caused each wolf to hang back in the hope that some other would begin the attack. Five minutes more passed by.

Apparently there could be but one end to the battle. But there was a factor which neither wolves nor pronghorn had considered:

A mile or so distant was the camp of some Prairie Rangers who were out for the government on a wolf-hunt. When Captain Kid and his band attacked the pronghorn their yells were heard by the Rangers' dogs. The dogs, giving tongue, waked their masters. And within two

or three minutes, two young men were in their saddles, riding toward the disturbance.

Without knowing that there was—or ever could be—help for him, Solomon II continued his unequal fight. Wolf after wolf recoiled from doing battle with him. The moments slipped away.

He did not hear the galloping hoofs across the prairie. But presently a shot rang out under the stars. Instantly—knowing that they were forever hated by the cattle-men whose flocks they destroyed—the wolves dived for cover. Solomon II was left by himself.

He looked, startled, at the Rangers, whose dogs came furiously at him. He could not know, of course, that a recent law protected the pronghorn; he was amazed when the men lowered their rifles, called off their dogs, and let him go free.

Also, there was a new idea in his head. He saw that while wolves always kill, men sometimes show mercy. When it came to a choice between men and wolves, hereafter, he would trust the man.

He walked away, shaking his head. The wind, blowing in his face, told him his band had reached the other side of the river, so he made his way

across the Purgatoire. He found them all quite safe; and their gallant young chief was a great hero to them. If any doubted whether the right pronghorn had been allowed to reign, the matter was settled now. Before that winter had passed, many strange pronghorns came and joined the band. For Solomon II was known far and wide as the chief who knew how to fool the wolves.

CHAPTER IX

Man's Ways are not for Pronghorns.

—From the last page of the PRONGHORN BOOK

NOW, indeed, a great change had taken place in the lives of the pronghorns. Quick to learn, they very soon decided that man was afraid to harm them. They grew so bold that they did not hesitate to blunder into a camp to look at something which had aroused their curiosity—till the Rangers were greatly amused, and one of them used to declare that the pronghorn certainly read the newspapers, else he could never have learned so promptly what the Legislature did. When hungry, little bands of pronghorns would leap fences and take the standing crops on the ranches. Altogether, they threatened to become a nuisance to the homesteader.

But Solomon II shook his wise head, for he knew there are only two ways in which the animals can live with man: they must be pets and prisoners, or slaves to do his bidding and unlearn their own wild ways forever.

Presently it became plain that the pronghorns were not prospering as in the past. Their num-

ber increased slightly, but they were not so strong and clever. One frosty morning, between winter and spring, five of Solomon's herd leaped a fence into a field of stubble, to see what they could find. A ranchman fired, though it was against the law, and two beautiful does were killed.

Nor was this the worst of what befell. The food they took from the ranches proved unwholesome, and pronghorns fell sick of strange diseases unknown to them in the past.

Now Solomon II turned his eyes toward the south. Many miles away, he had heard from his father, lay a wild and desolate plain. There, if the wolves should pursue him, would be no Ranger to help him out of his difficulty. The eagles sailed above the place, from their eyrie nests in the foothills, and now and then might find an antelope kid. When pronghorns were hungry they must get their own living; there would be no fields to plunder. But there, far from men, they would be free. And so the great chief said to his herd, "Let us go."

They began their migration one autumn, when the roads of the settled farming country were thronged with wagons taking the sugar beets to the factories. From the ranches scattered over

the plain, dogs rushed out at them; for the animals that live with man are always at war with the wild.

Solomon was glad when he had led his herd beyond the farms, to the passes of the mountains beyond. Now they heard wolves at night, and sometimes saw a little black bear stuffing himself with piñon nuts before going to bed for the winter.

At last they came again to the plains. They saw the low, purple hills which look like smoke in the distance, and the tall cactus, and the desert home of the white-footed rat. No locomotive crossed this plain, nor any motor road. There was a great dog town, with fat little citizens scurrying about, and burrowing owls, and snakes. For the prairie-dog cannot live with man; he spoils the land for crops and is driven from every section of country where farming is done, as fast as the Rangers can destroy his homes.

The pronghorn loves the prairie-dog. At noon Solomon's herd lay down to rest close beside the town. If any danger approached, they knew, the little dogs would set up such a barking, before bobbing into their doorways, that the pronghorns would be warned in good time.

Now Solomon's heart was at peace. In this desolate place, not wanted by the homesteader, he would rule his herd, perhaps, for many years to come. They would keep the wild old maxims of their own book, and live in their own way. He was a great chief. Perhaps, some day, he would meet his death—as a good chief should—in defending the herd.

The sun shone on the trampled mud of the water-hole, and the feet of the antelope bird left their prints among the hoofmarks; the taste of that water was sweeter, to him, than the irrigating ditch of the farming country. His eyes rolled over the prairie. As far as he could see were no plowed fields or ranch-house chimneys to disturb him—but brown earth, and softly colored hills, and the shining sky of the plains.

Here in the Southwest still lives King Solomon II. When a dark night comes and the wolves run him down while his band escapes, or if a hunter's bullet finds him defending the herd, he will die nobly for others. And One who sees even a sparrow fall to the ground will not fail to find the creature He has made both brave and good.

*A Little Beast That
Knows All the Rest.*



CHAPTER I

It is a good thing occasionally to change one's ways.

—FROM THE WISDOM OF THE RABBIT
Page One

THERE is one little beast whose habits of living, eating, and eluding enemies cannot well be described. Every time the cottontail rabbit moves to a new place with slightly different conditions, or meets a fresh enemy he must elude by his wits, he sets himself to devise a new plan of living. If you wish to be very exact, you must call him "a hare," as he does not belong to the family of Old World rabbits, who live in burrows in the ground. His nearest European cousins sleep on what are termed "forms" of earth with grass on them and thick bushes for shelter. In some parts of the United States the cottontails keep to these habits of the hare, because they are most sensible; but if you meet this little beast on the prairies of the West, you will discover that he has learned to dig. As there are many other localities in which the burrow seems the most desirable home for a rabbit, it is always an inter-

esting bit of investigation to search out how the rabbits about one's own home are living.

The cottontail is quite as broad-minded about food as in choosing a lodging. If he happens to live among New England farms, he robs the gardens of young vegetables in summer, and gnaws the orchard trees when snow is on the ground. If, however, he is of Rocky Mountain birth, roots and stalks of plants, with the young buds of the quaking-aspen, make a perfectly satisfactory diet.

Little Wiseacre, of the great Cottontail family, was born on a vast, wild prairie. But it would not be correct to say, as they do in story-books, that he "saw the light" there. For two reasons he saw no light at all, at first. He was perfectly blind when born; and very little light entered the place his mother had selected as a nursery. This was the burrow of a prairie-dog.

Outside, in the strange world of sunshine and noise, about which the three little cottontails knew nothing at all, was the month of purple and gold. Along every little watercourse asters and golden-rod crowded each other for space—which means, as everyone knows, that it was late in the year. It would seem that these feeble babies would have

a pretty hard time when the first snow came; for rabbit mothers do not care for their children in the winter.

But the three grew rapidly. It was not long before little Wiseacre was stealing to the door of the living room and peering up the corridor to see a long bar of sunlight fall on the earth wall near the entrance. Here, too, he could catch the sounds of the outer world—wind in the tall weeds near his home, and the cries of blackbirds feeding at the edge of a tiny watercourse. As he watched and listened, he wondered about the world beyond his burrow.

There were other things over his head besides goldenrod and birds, among them enemies on account of whom Mother Cottontail had chosen to hide her children in the ground.

One morning, across the prairie from the watercourse with goldenrod and purple stars, came a thick, short-legged animal with a beautiful coat of fur. His claws were heavy, his legs powerful, indicating his way of getting a living—for when he could not pick small animals from their sleeping-places under bushes he dug them from their holes in the ground. He was, in short, a badger.

Now cottontails can dig shallow holes of their own; and there is nothing a badger would rather find than such a place, with the whole family at home. The cottontail method of burrow-making is quite simple; the burrow amounts to little more than a hall and a living room. Of course they can work their way out of these homes if the front entrance is blocked, but perhaps no animal in America can outdig the badger. With paws like shovels, he enlarges the doorways and corridors of small animals. Before they can begin to tunnel their way out at the rear he has broken into their living room and is upon them.

At sight of the old prairie-dog mounds he paused to sniff. This town had been deserted for a year, but he saw in the sand the trail of little feet leading toward one of the burrows. Mother Cottontail had gone out and come in by this path every day since her children were born.

Now, as he waited, sniffing, he saw her scudding across the prairie toward her home. Many wild mothers remain away from their children when they see danger about, for fear of showing the enemy the way; but Mother Cottontail had her own plans. Moreover, she was not one of those animals who always act in the same way.



"A THICK, SHORT-LEGGED ANIMAL, WITH A BEAUTIFUL COAT OF FUR"

Her white tail gleamed in the sun like the rump of an antelope; her pink-gray body was scarcely visible against the dying grass of the prairie. She dived into her home burrow and down the corridor to her children.

"Danger!" she gasped. "Danger!" Nobody knows the rabbit word for "danger," or yet for "badger;" but no cottontail mother ever failed to make her children understand when an enemy was near.

The youngsters were by this time able to follow her. When she rushed through the back door of the living room they were right at her heels, breathless and giving little squeaks of excitement.

They found themselves in the back hallway about which they had known nothing until now, and which led to the house next door. Here their mother paused, and the little family huddled behind her. They could hear the badger above them, rapidly shoveling out dirt, crushing the roof and walls of their front hall. In some way their mother warned them to be very quiet. Noiselessly she crept through the back hall; noiselessly they followed to the rear of the next

prairie-dog home. There was no one at home but a mouse, playing in the deserted living room.

But Mother Cottontail had no idea of halting so near the enemy. She plunged down another hallway, leading to a third burrow. This old dog town covered more than an acre of space, and the cottontails soon found themselves a long distance from their home. On the extreme east side of town they crept into the living room of a burrow so large it might have belonged to the mayor himself. Here Mother Cottontail told her three children to wait while she reconnoitered. Their hearts beat hard; they could see one another's eyes, in the dark of the mayor's living room. Now they could no longer hear the digging of the badger, echoed through long corridors of earth; only their mother's light footfalls as she stole up the corridor to peep from the mayor's front door.

Presently they heard her returning to them. And it was exciting news she brought.

The burrow in which they had been born was a ruin, its front hall destroyed, the living room crushed in on all sides, the bed with its gray wool blanket buried under two feet of earth; but she had seen no sign of the badger. She now told

her young ones they might follow her out into the light.

And so little Wiseacre emerged, at three weeks old, to look in great amazement at the world. He blinked in the strong light, while his two sisters hid their eyes against their mother. Wabbling his nose, as his eyes grew accustomed to sunshine, Wiseacre looked across the sunny prairie to the little watercourse with asters and goldenrod. Over him was blue without a cloud. Wings dashed through it, and nearer, some big, swallowtail butterflies were floating. The wind brought pleasant odors, as if the prairie might be covered with good things to eat. So this, he thought, was the world! Surely he would find it very interesting and would be able to do many wonderful things in it.

But Mother Cottontail was restless and uneasy. As she led her family away from the dog town, she paused at intervals to scan the prairie for an enemy; and when a larger bird than the goldfinches which flocked overhead cut through the sky, she gave, softly, her little call which meant "Danger." Then she led the three youngsters to the watercourse, where she made them squat

under shelter of a bush. That is the real old cottontail way of eluding danger. Still, it had been a fortunate thing for Mother Cottontail's family that she forsook the old fashions and lived awhile in a prairie-dog's house.

CHAPTER II

The Hawk cannot change its plan after starting

—FROM RABBIT WISDOM
Chapter One

MUCH of rabbit wisdom consists in knowing about other animals. For the cottontail never attacks other creatures, but is forever pursued, and there is nothing so important to those who are on the defensive as to know the weaknesses of the enemy. Young rabbits are quick to learn their book, and within a month of his birth little Wiseacre had acquired so much wisdom that he no longer needed his mother's counsel, but could take care of himself on the prairie. He was not unusual in this. Now and then, as he wandered about looking for leaves, roots, and stalks that were good to eat, he used to meet a stranger who seemed to him a fully grown and very wise rabbit; this cottontail—though neither had an idea of the fact—was Wiseacre's own brother, born in April of that year, and consequently less than four months older than himself.

Before he had been for many days on his own

responsibility, Wiseacre learned that danger lurked in the constant recurrence of a swift-winged shadow on the face of the prairie. His mother, he recalled, had run for cover at sight of that flying, dark splotch on the earth, without pausing to look into the sky whence it seemed to fall. Wiseacre followed her example, and it was from the center of a clump of rabbit-brush, to which he had run for safety, that he had his first glimpse of the red-tail.

This big hawk was constantly flying above that bit of level land. The broad, dark shadow she flung on the earth gave no idea of her real appearance. She was a surprisingly handsome bird, with her long, powerful wings, a bright chestnut back and buff vest, and a tail like a great red fan in the sun. The sight of her made Wiseacre tremble and flatten himself against the earth.

A rabbit with his living to get cannot stay always under cover in fear of a hawk. Wiseacre went abroad as before; but as he was always ready to fly for cover at sight of his enemy, he did not get the fat on his little bones, which would make him fit to stand the winter. Finally it began to be plain that he would have to match wits with that hawk.

As again and again he saw the red-tail make her swoop from over the level, he observed that she always seemed to know exactly how to calculate her pounce. The red-tail's book must have wonderful mathematics in it, for she can work out a problem which comes far along in high school algebra—she can look at a creature running along the ground, calculate her own distance in air, and then know just where the running creature will be by the time she has reached the earth. Surely it would seem that a young rabbit would be outwitted by such a learned bird. But the rabbit book is not to be despised.

Wiseacre saw another thing. If she missed her calculation and struck in the wrong place, she could not mend matters by swerving to one side in pursuit of the game. When she tried that, her effort was nearly always a failure. If a little beast she happened to be chasing would just think of stopping suddenly or swerving to one side, he might throw her off his track. Wiseacre wobbled his nose, which is the rabbit way of thinking, as he matched his wits with the bird's. This hawk might be a better mathematician, but there are some things not in arithmetics.

Next day, as Wiseacre left the cover of his

brushheap, his mind was on a patch of late cabbage a quarter of a mile away. He knew his route: a dash across the open prairie where the red-tail's shadow plied back and forth; then a fenced field, with tumbleweed blowing in from the prairie, and beyond this two acre stretch, the cabbages. He set out boldly, though the gray of his coat showed plainly against yellowing autumn grass. He had not half crossed the field when the hawk's shadow fell directly before him, then circled about his flying body. In the sky above, the red-tail was taking her bearings, to swoop.

Wiseacre ran on toward his selected field until the shadow remained an instant motionless on the earth; that was the beginning of the swoop. As the hawk started downward he swerved violently to one side, leaped, and was on toward his fence. But he had felt those great wings very near, and now his heart thumped at his ribs, for he knew it was a dangerous game he had begun to play. Sooner or later, if a rabbit tries this trick for long, he will fumble in his turning, and then the red-tail will win.

She mounted into the air, not so high as before, and swooped again. This time Wiseacre squealed with terror; for he had felt the swish of air from

her wings, and her claws just missed his back. His flying leap carried him through the barbed-wire fence of the field.

The cabbages lay at the farther end of this long stretch of wire fencing, in a patch some distance back from the road. As Wiseacre sped alongside the wires, he saw the shadow of the red-tail pursuing his own along the earth. He knew when the hawk began her sweep downward to seize him, for the dark outline of her wings remained one instant motionless. As soon as she was well started to pounce, Wiseacre slipped through to the outside of the fence, and fled on as before.

A wonderful mathematician, the red-tail! She had made such a perfect calculation that she knew she could not miss the flying rabbit. But these hawks, after all, depend for their success upon the stupidity of small animals they are hunting; it did not occur to her as possible that the game should alter its course. Arithmetic is a fine thing to get results, but a person who knows nothing else is always likely to make mistakes. Of course she swooped to the inside of the fence. When within two feet of the ground she perceived there was no rabbit under her claws, and, by

swerving rapidly, just escaped bruising herself against the hard earth. Before she could make ready for another pounce Wiseacre had covered several rods in the direction of the cabbages.

The red-tail swooped again, and, as before, after noting the moment at which she turned in air, he slipped through the fence and fled on, now on the inside. He could keep this game going as long as he had strength to run; and as for that open stretch, where there was no protecting fence,—which he must cross in order to reach his cabbages—he had a little plan.

Tumbleweed had blown in masses into the corner which marked the end of the fenced field. As seen from above, this treacherous mass of briars would make a mere gray film against the earth. It would look feather soft, so that a creature not acquainted with it would not be afraid to plunge into it. Wiseacre knew the tumbleweed. When he wished a sleeping-hole that would be safe from coyotes, he used to creep under where a mass of the thorny stuff chanced to shelter a crevice of the earth, knowing that the enemy would not risk having his feet full of thorns in the effort to dig out the place.

Now he intended that the tumbleweed should

fight the red-tail for him. It was a gusty day, late in September. Huge balls of tumbleweed, torn from their roots by the wind, came bounding through the field, to be checked at the fence corners. As Wiseacre approached the large mass at the end of his fence, he saw the red-tail's shadow once more become stationary, and again he slid between the wires. If he had continued in his path, as when the red-tail sighted him, he would have been in the tumbleweed when she pounced. Instead, he squatted under the wire, against a post.

A scream of anger and alarm announced that the red-tail had struck the tumbleweed. Wiseacre, knowing that she would be occupied for some time, skipped from the shadow of his post and across a bare, brown stretch of earth where his flying gray body would have been an easy target for the hawk. He could hear her screaming and flapping her wings as with every renewal of her struggle more of her feathers became entangled in the tumbleweed. When at last he gained the cabbages he had cover as well as food; and squatting between two large plants, he looked back to see how his enemy was getting on.

The hawk had finally succeeded in tearing her-

self from the briers; but many gray feathers remained, and a few rusty ones, like splashes of blood in the mass of tumbleweed. As she sailed away, a scrap of brier remained attached to her breast, and her claws were entangled with more of the treacherous stuff. After all, a red-tail is not so terrible! There is everything in knowing what she can do! Wiseacre reflected, chuckling to himself and thoughtfully wabbling his nose.

CHAPTER III

Do not make a house such as you have been used to, without being sure it is the right kind for you.

—RABBIT WISDOM, the Chapter on Building

WISEACRE had been brought up in a burrow, and when first he began to run alone he thought this the only sort of home for young rabbits. He enlarged a nice crevice in the earth till he had an excellent rabbit burrow. It was, of course, very simple—just a short hall and one large room which served for sleeping and general living. He had never learned, like the squirrels and prairie-dogs, the use of a pantry for storing food. He depended on what he could pick up, to eat. In the winter which was coming, frozen grass and bark of trees would have to serve.

For a few days Wiseacre was well satisfied with his burrow. Then came the high winds of Indian summer, and all the tumbleweed blew to lower levels near the creeks and rivers. The front door of his burrow was now open to everyone who passed by. He saw badgers about, and now and then a coyote. For several nights he slept un-

easily, ready to take to his legs at the appearance of an enemy; but that is no way to grow fat and strong. He began to be lonely.

One day, as he was returning from an excursion to his favorite cabbage patch, he heard a sound which greatly interested him—the thunder of feet pounding the earth at no great distance. Wiseacre knew they were rabbit feet, and their beating of the earth spelled out words which no human being understands, but which form a kind of rabbit telegraphic code. Just how Wiseacre had learned to understand this language of his kind, no person knows. But it pleased and excited him, and he skipped across the prairie with the long, jerky leaps a rabbit takes when he is listening for the code. It was not long before he came to the handsome rabbit, gray and silky, who must have been a few weeks older than himself. Wiseacre was so delighted to find a playmate that he immediately touched noses with the young stranger. He was very kindly welcomed; his new friend was as lonely as himself.

They both agreed that this was no time of year to be living in open burrows, and the older youngster explained his idea to Wiseacre. He did not know where he got it, but it is the custom of hares

in the East to sleep on what are called "forms"—so this Rocky Mountain cottontail was just following the ways of his grandfathers. Now a rabbit form is just a hard platform of earth, with the grass stamped down and if possible a bush or tree near by. Here rabbits sit when they are not hunting food, just as English schoolboys do, to get their lessons, on what they call "forms"—the benches occupied in school. There may not be classes for study among the young rabbits, but they are all busy, in the late autumn when they occupy these places, in getting the rabbit book by heart; learning how to elude enemies, how to make signals to one another along the earth, what sort of food to choose, and what kind of plants are medicine when a rabbit is sick.

Wiseacre and his new companion at once decided to sleep on a form. This would be much safer than the open burrow, as they could jump and run on the instant, with no danger of being trapped in the living room. But they wanted a larger colony. The more rabbits, the more certain it would be that if danger approached some of the sleepers would hear and warn the others. As the two cottontails roamed over the prairie, youngster after youngster joined them. They

selected for their sleeping-place the earth between two large evergreen shrubs. When on this form Wiseacre and his friends sat up like school-boys, wabbling their noses as they absorbed the wisdom of their book. Nobody passing by would guess the presence of young rabbits except as now and then a pair of eyes or a thoughtfully wiggled nose peeped from the shelter of the evergreen.

The book which they studied? It was not made of paper and cloth, but written in herbs and curious tracks on the earth and other things a rabbit sees with his bright eyes close to the ground. Part of it, too, was written in Wiseacre's own head. These were the things he had to think most about, and over which he constantly wobbled his nose as he sat on the form. When he wobbled his nose, he was really trying to understand.

CHAPTER IV

*What occupies a hawk's nest in early winter is not always a hawk.
It may be something worse.*

—From "RABBIT WISDOM": A chapter for the study of young rabbits in November

THE form where Wiseacre and his friends lived in safety and happiness was located near a river along which grew tall, aged cottonwoods. Hawks loved this place in summer, and, now that the leaves had blown thin, a huge, deserted nest could be seen in the crotch of a limb far above the ground. All the young rabbits knew that Red-tail had gone south for the winter—surely there could be no danger, now, in passing her deserted summer cottage.

But there were things about that old nest which Wiseacre found vaguely unpleasant. In the first place, a rabbit has *feelings* about places, such as boys mean when they speak of a "hunch." Also, he noticed curious signs. Sometimes, when the wind was not blowing, the whole structure would stir uneasily. Once, in the early morning, he saw sticking out of the nest a mass of fur. He did not know why a hawk should leave all that

fur in her nest when she went south. Anyhow, Wiseacre and his companions gave the place a wide berth, and so the plants under the tree remained untasted and were juicy and tempting long after the soft parts of other growing things had been gnawed away, so that the rabbits had to breakfast, on chilly mornings, upon half-frozen grass.

One afternoon, as Wiseacre was returning home to the form, he was strongly tempted to have a taste of the plantain going to waste under the cottonwood. Mist from the river had watered it well in the late summer drought, and the overhanging cottonwood kept it from frosting. He stopped, wabbling his nose.

Every rabbit loves to experiment. To be sure, the rabbit book said plainly, "Look out for hawks' nests in winter." Was it, then, wrong to try a bit, and find out why?

Disobeying the book is a serious thing. Wiseacre finally decided that he would not do this for a taste of fresh vegetables—only when it was quite necessary to his life and safety. He decided to depend on frosted grass for his supper.

The sky was just brightening behind the cottonwood, and a pink light fell on the river.

About the time Wiseacre reached his sensible decision, a wood mouse came this way in search of food. Wiseacre saw her dart and stop, stop and dart, as she approached the tree with the old nest in it. Then suddenly something happened in the treetop which made Wiseacre's heart stand still. A furry body had tumbled out of the old hawk's nest and lay on the limb. A stumpy tail and two eyes appeared; then came a spring, and Wiseacre leaped and ran away as fast as he could cover the ground.

He had learned why hawks' nests are to be dreaded in winter. The bobcats take them for sleeping-places.

CHAPTER V

Don't starve, for fear of Poison.

—RABBIT WISDOM, Winter Chapter

ONE night a bitter wind blew over the plains. There had been snow the day before, and the buffy horned larks of the prairie had buried themselves in it up to their necks, to keep warm. Yet they shivered as they felt the wind, and gave their little complaining cry: "Oh, dee-ar! Oh, dee-ar!"

The mercury dropped, that night, till the leaves of the cottonwoods snapped and groaned and all the fish in the river went to its sandy bottom, to lie asleep while the ice formed two feet thick above them. That night the young rabbits cowered close together and shivered under their shelter of evergreen. They had gone to bed hungry, as the snow now covered even the frozen grass.

They could see that the time had passed for sleeping on a form. The moon rose white and clear, so cold it looked as if it might snap in two just above the earth. The ground was frozen like rock—no badger could dig into a burrow to-

night, or, probably, for many weeks to come. So all the shivering youngsters slipped out on the snow-covered plain.

Wiseacre now remembered the prairie-dog town where his babyhood had been spent. With legs so stiff he could scarcely cover the ground, he led the way toward the place. Halfway there, he came upon a burrow which he knew had been empty for many months; a pack-rat had built it years before. Wiseacre turned in at this doorway; but a sound from within sent him scampering back into the cold. The black-footed ferret, which no rabbit loves, had taken that warm house for his own.

At last appeared the mounds of the great dog town. Owls were always there in summer, dodging in and out of the burrows. For the three winter months the place was lonely and still, and to-night its black doorways opened hospitably to any half-frozen little beasts who could not dig good winter houses for themselves. Wiseacre led his companions into the entrance hall of that large burrow which might have belonged to the mayor of dog town long ago. The corridor made several turns, then suddenly dropped almost vertically in a kind of stairway, to the underground

living room. Here little prairie-dogs of many summers had been born and reared. Out of this same living room Wiseacre and his two little sisters had once crept, to take their first peep at a lovely autumn world. It was a pleasant place to come shivering back to, that night in November. The youngsters crowded the mayor's living room; and soon all were warm as toast in their underground home. Over their heads the earth was freezing into a wall hard as rock, a perfect protection against most enemies.

But with the breaking of day the young rabbits remembered that they were hungry. After all, the best heat is that which comes from food; and a healthy rabbit can run about all day, with the mercury far below zero, enjoying life to the utmost, if only his blood is warm and red from good and abundant food.

As Wiseacre was unusually clever and bold, for a youngster, the others always allowed him to be their leader. He knew of a cabbage-patch which belonged, as he thought, to a large, brown dog with no liking for rabbits. And he knew another thing: the dog who owned the farm where the cabbages grew had taken a man he kept to help

him about the place and gone on a winter hunting trip up the Poudre River.

Now, as Wiseacre had not visited the cabbage-patch since this dog was purchased to keep off rabbits, he did not know that all the cabbages had been dug, months before, and shipped to Chicago. His companions followed him, eager for cabbage. While rabbits do not keep close together when making a raid for food, they seem to travel in company—always with one who knows the way. That is, if a garden is invaded at all, it will be not by one rabbit, but by several. Wiseacre and his friends skipped across a two-acre field and alongside a fence, keeping within a few feet of each other, until they sighted the cabbages.

It was a great disappointment to find that the field had been stripped. Their empty stomachs gnawed like the bitter cold of the morning. In the snowy, deserted garden Wiseacre paused and wobbled his nose.

There was a curious sort of trench, covered with burlap on which snow had been piled. That dog had been digging at one end; it looked very much as if a rabbit could work his way inside. Wiseacre sniffed.

A curious odor came from the trench. The

nearest rabbit of Wiseacre's companions was very much alarmed and ran away. Strange smells might mean poison. There are so many different sorts of poison, it is always wiser, if possible, for a rabbit to eat the things he knows.

But when very hungry it is better to take a chance than starve. So Wiseacre felt. He pushed his head boldly under the burlap and snow, into the trench.

This was certainly queer food. He was not sure that he liked it very well, but it seemed wholesome and nourishing. He made a heavy meal of it. And when the other rabbits saw that it did not hurt him, they too ventured. Wiseacre began to like the taste. He thought he shouldn't mind living on this stuff until the snow melted. The bleached end was crisp and sweet; he nibbled off the leaves, as there was so much of the new food, and threw them on the snow.

About the time he felt that he could eat no more the kitchen door of the farmhouse opened and a little girl rushed out. "Mother, mother," she called, "the garden's full of rabbits and they're eating the celery we saved for Thanksgiving!"

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Her mother groaned. "With celery twenty-five cents a bunch! The little scamps!"

Wiseacre and his companions had taken to their heels. As they skipped across the snow they felt gay, as they always did when their stomachs were full. "Winter," thought Wiseacre, "is not half bad, after all."

CHAPTER VI

Man is big and has a gun, but he is not clever.

—From the RABBIT BOOK, the Chapter on "Enemies"

THAT was a bitter winter. Some animals solve the problem of keeping warmth in themselves by sleeping away the winter months; but to sleep long without food one must have a very slow heartbeat. The bear scarcely breathes while he lies in his den, dead to the world of storm and snow, gradually absorbing the layers of fat he put on his body in the autumn. A person who digs out a gopher in cold weather is likely to throw him aside as a dead one, since the little creature's heart beats so slightly and at such long intervals, there is no sign of life in his body. Even the chipmunk slows down his life processes after retiring to the hole from which he emerges two or three times in a winter. But the rabbit's heart is swift, his blood warm and red, and he must be out every day of his life for exercise and food. It is hard going for a rabbit in winter, when many other small creatures are asleep, and

the attention of all the hunters is turned on him. Yet he does not appear to be made unhappy by the hunters, but behaves as if he found it a very amusing game to give them the slip. In the bitterest weather he never loses heart and hope.

When the mercury dropped far below zero Wiseacre was constantly hungry. He had now taken up his residence in the old prairie-dog town where he was born, but his lodging, warm and sheltered on a bitter night, was unfortunately far from food, so that he exposed his life every time he needed to hunt a meal. Some of the big jack-rabbits had put on pure white coats for the winter, and were almost invisible when speeding over the snow. Wiseacre's mottled fur was suited to the brushy places in which most Western cottontails get their living; but he found it necessary to cross a wide expanse of snow in order to reach some fields in which were a few frozen beet roots. There lived the brown dog, and he had come back to his farm. The man, too, was with him.

Wiseacre thought a great deal about that man who belonged to the dog. By and by he discovered that though the dog was so much cleverer about chasing rabbits and could run better, besides, he seemed to do as the man said. Yes, there could

be no doubt the man was master. That was very odd.

The dog was always watching the fields. He could not catch such a swift rabbit as Wiseacre, but as soon as he saw him would call in loud tones for the man. And Wiseacre found out, by and by, that the man had a gun. After he learned that, just as soon as he heard the house door open, Wiseacre would run to cover.

One day he was making his way across the field all by himself. As he went he would stop and start, start and stop, like a mouse, listening to catch a sound of the dog. Whom should he meet, then, but the man himself? And the man had the gun on his shoulder.

Shot rained on the earth beside the rabbit as he ran; but after escaping he ran under a tussock of earth, where, he felt sure, the man was too stupid to find him.

But men, Wiseacre had observed, though very dull themselves, could always get the dog to work for them when they hunted—and a dog had sense. When the man whistled for his dog, the young rabbit leaped from his hiding-place and was off.

He could run much faster than the dog, and was soon over the top of a hill, out of sight. A



"HE SQUATTED ON THE HUNTER'S COAT"

rabbit likes to run uphill, because his hind legs are longer and more powerful than those in front. With each bound they propel his body far forward, so that he easily gains on a pursuing dog. Besides, he does not become winded like his enemy.

When he felt sure that the dog could no longer see him, Wiseacre proceeded to play the old rabbit trick of killing his scent. He stopped in his tracks, then took a long run backward by the path he had come. The longest leap he could make carried him out into a snow-field, and another bound took him to the shelter of a bush, where he squatted to see what would happen.

Very soon the dog appeared, sniffing along his trail. When it came to a sudden end he was much bewildered. Had the rabbit dissolved into the air, here, from pure fright? Had a hawk taken him off? The puzzled dog sniffed the air; but Wiseacre had of course taken pains to squat where the wind would carry his scent away from the trail. This rabbit trick has been played a hundred million times by a million rabbits; yet no dog seems to learn it. The poor beast could not think of anything to do, so he called his master. And presently the man appeared.

"You're a stupid dog, Brownie," he said. "You've let that rabbit fool you." The dog hung his head at this, and let his tail knock the snow, in mortification. Then the man—who hadn't smelled the game at all and would have been easily fooled, by himself—whistled to Brownie to follow him. The dog obeyed, as he always did, and the two proceeded to make a long circuit about the point at which the game trail had ended. In this way they soon reached a place below the hiding-place of the rabbit, to which the wind carried his scent. The dog stiffened his poor tail and yelped with delight as he bounded for the game, but Wiseacre was up and away.

As before, he soon outdistanced his pursuer. This time he shaped his course toward a ravine in which the top ice of a small stream had been broken for cattle to drink. Blocks of ice were floating in the water and it looked very black; but Wiseacre cut through, and of course the stream immediately carried his scent away.

Man and dog were close behind him. Straight ahead, as he gained the farther side, was a high slope, white, unbroken as the icing on a new fruit-cake before Christmas; if he tried to take that, a shot would catch him. He stopped, wabbling

his nose to think, under cover of some rabbit brush.

The dog came to the edge of the water, and when he lost the scent seemed as usual to be very much puzzled; but of course Wiseacre knew that he would soon plunge through and appear close at hand.

His own position wouldn't do at all, for he squatted due north of the point at which the dog was sure to emerge from the stream, and the wind would carry his scent. He must not try to run far; snow-fields hemmed in this walled-up place. He did not move through the rabbit brush, which would have stirred and betrayed him, but leaped in shadow from bush to bush till he had found a place he thought safe. He squatted where a few gray branches, mottled with snow, just matched his coat, and once more waited to see what might happen.

The dog was soon yelping wildly on his side of the stream; but just as when the game had killed its scent before, a strong wind carried the rabbit smell away from him.

The man also crossed the stream; and as he was warm from his long chase, took off his gray coat and flung it on the slope. Then he scanned the

snow-field, ready to fire as soon as the dog should succeed in driving the game out of its shelter.

Now the big brown beast, stirring the rabbit brush, began to work his way southward of Wiseacre's hiding-place. In a moment he would be getting the scent. Wiseacre dared not cut across the snow-field. Wabbling his nose, he looked about him till he spied a suitable hiding-place.

Ah! he had it! While the dog's back was turned, and the man scanned the snow-field, he slipped across some mottled soil and squatted on the gray coney collar of the hunter's coat. It happened that the hunter was directly down the wind from him. But that was no matter. The dog, who could smell, had found his trail in the rabbit brush and was working it back toward the stream.

The dog yelped furiously as he found the scent again; and the man turned, to catch up his coat and follow. While he did so he had to lay aside his gun for a moment. A little gray beast leaped from the coney collar where he had been squatting, and was off across the now unguarded snow-field. Before the man could recover from his surprise—for a gun is a clumsy thing compared with teeth and claws, always ready for use—the

rabbit was out of gunshot and under cover in the woods beyond.

The dog rushed furiously after him, but was called off by the man, who said he didn't propose to run *his* legs off for a *rabbit*. (But such talk is sour grapes and makes a rabbit laugh.)

Wiseacre chuckled as he squatted in cover. He hadn't even lost his supper, for he had got all the beet root he cared for before the chase began. And he knew he could easily get back to his burrow in the old dog town.

What the rabbit book said was perfectly true: man was big, he had a gun, and in some way he could wheedle the dog into hunting for him, but he was not clever. *He could not smell what was right under his nose.*

That was a beautiful winter night. As soon as it was fully dark the moon swung high in the sky above a pure white world. Midnight came. A man was asleep in a farmhouse under the hill, a brown dog in his kennel, a little gray rabbit in a prairie-dog's burrow not far away. The same silver-gray light peeked in at all their dwellings and made them dream. The man went hunting in his sleep; the dog thought he was following his dear master across rabbit brush; and the little

gray beast in the burrow had such an amusing dream that he chuckled aloud to himself.

The winter was by this time more than half done. Wiseacre was fat and strong, likely to thrive and become a sensible and successful rabbit. As spring came on he had few adventures. On moonlit nights, when it was not bitterly cold, he often went to play with other cottontails in a little arroyo which made a pleasant ground for sports. People do not understand rabbit games; but here, sometimes, they would dance and frolic till midnight.

The nights grew less cold and the days were very warm. Young plants, springing up everywhere, gave the rabbits the finest of food. One day, as Wiseacre was skipping across the prairie, he saw a white star open in the grass. This was the first flower—it was spring. “What a pleasant place the world is!” thought Wiseacre.

The Princess
Felis



CHAPTER I

"What is the most beautiful thing in the world?"

THE Princess of the Black Canyon could easily answer that question; for the answer was in her book of wisdom. Since the members of her family are not very clever, their book is quite short and simple—but they all know everything in it by heart, before they are considered grown-up.

It is not so easy as one might think, to name the most beautiful thing in the world. There were many lovely sights, even in that section of the Rockies where the Princess had her castle. Mariposa lilies are pretty things, in June, holding up greenish-white bowls in the long grass. There is also the painted-cup, bright scarlet, blossoming on bare slopes of the hills. Some people might prefer the tanager, since, with his gold plumage splashed with red,¹ he can flash from tree to tree and carry a bit of brilliant color even into the sky itself. In winter there are icicles that hang down

¹ The Western, or Louisiana, tanager is meant. We do not have the scarlet tanager in our section.

like jewels, where the slope above the Black Canyon rises toward the sun—and white ermine weasels and velvet minks. But none of these fine sights confused the Princess in answering her question:

The loveliest thing in the world is a mountain-lion kitten.

The first she ever had were born in February, in a cave in the Black Canyon. Their heads were very large, they were as blind as bats, and they squirmed like young mice, and whimpered, trying to get under each other for warmth. Only one being in the world thought they were handsome—that was the Princess. She licked their tawny coats, spotted like leopards', and told them, every hour of the day, how beautiful they were.

It was very hard for her to think of leaving her beautiful kittens, but the time came when she must go a-hunting. She came back more than once, to peep into the cave and to listen awhile to the whimpers which seemed to her the sweetest sound in the woods. When at last she left the canyon, she made the greatest speed with her hunting, ate her kill in haste, and fled back to her kittens.

As she drew near the place, she listened, but

no baby whines were to be heard. The silence made her heart sink with fear, and she leaped across the canyon, to reach the cave, sending, as she did so, a shower of rock fragments into the water.

There were strange tracks about her door and a strange smell lingered in the air. The mother rushed into the place which had been her home, and a wail of distress came from her. Her kittens were gone.

She called, and called them; there was no answer. She searched every corner of the cave, and shook the leaves which had served as their blanket, and, when she could find no trace of her family, went out of her desolate home.

But a mountain lion has a small brain, and after a few moments she forgot how thorough a search she had made. Returning to the cave, she examined every corner and shook all the blankets again. In vain. Now she knew that her kittens were gone forever. She went out and sat alone on the rock opposite, and all that day she did not move except, with a little moan, to lay down her head. Days passed, and she wanted nothing to eat or drink; her heart was broken.

Sorrow does not last forever. After a time

she began to go about again as if she had forgotten the death of her kittens; but after events proved that she had not.

When, in the early spring of another year, she prepared for a new family, she avoided the cave which had been discovered by an enemy, and chose a place to which no human being had ever found his way. Her second litter of kittens had not opened their eyes when a high wind blew down the slope an old red handkerchief with the scent of man on it. At once she knew that odor which had remained in her home after her kittens disappeared. In great terror, she took the new babies away from the place, farther down the Black Canyon. It was on a moonlit night that she moved her home, fetching her kittens, one at a trip, by the scruff of their little necks. At one point which she had to cross, the moon shone into the defile, whitening the broad flat rock where she paused, a kitten in her mouth, to look about for enemies. But no one saw her flitting with her family; before morning the kittens were safe in the innermost depth of the Black Canyon.

A "black canyon" is one to the depth of which the sun has never made its way, and at the point



"SHE CARRIED EACH KITTEN BY THE SCRUFF OF ITS NECK."

the Princess had selected for her new home the defile was so narrow that such sunlight as touched the cliffs rising far above her home came in at noon only, and to a point but a few feet below the top. The whole canyon, here, was in twilight all day long; but when the Princess looked down from the cavern to which she had moved her family, the stream at the bottom of the cliff looked black as soot, with a few floating islands of white foam.

Her newly chosen castle did not open near the river. Part way to the top of the cliff, on the darker side, sandstone had crumbled away from between two strata of hard rock, leaving a cavernous space large enough to shelter the mother and her three young ones. Here she had taken up her residence, and she felt that her family would be safe.

She had to have food in order to have milk for them, else she might have starved herself rather than go away to hunt. Each time she left them it was with an uneasy heart, and with no thought but to do her hunting as quickly as possible and return to protect her children. She was by this time of unusual size for a female of her kind—seven feet in length, and standing high at the

shoulder. Her dull yellow coat, with white underneath the body, gave a very handsome effect. Moreover, she looked exceedingly formidable. But the mountain lion, or "cougar," is not really close of kin to the great African lion which by its daring has given reason for the expression "as bold as a lion." Our Rocky Mountain lion is usually of quite a timid disposition. It seldom leaves its dark sleeping-quarters by daylight; it will never attack human beings unless cornered; and it has been known to run into a tree when chased by a dog. Hunters say it can be frightened away from its food by an unarmed man. But when there are kittens, most "lionesses" become bold and determined, and it would have been very unsafe to approach the Princess as she was devouring a freshly killed rabbit in haste to get back to her kittens.

She made bold raids on sheep and stray poultry—risking her life every day rather than remain for long away from the Black Canyon. Some of the ranchmen of the country perceived that there was a lioness about, with kittens, and made a search for the den, but she had hidden it so cunningly it was never discovered.

The family of animals to which she belonged

was indicated by the appearance of her rapidly growing kittens. In the dim light which shone about their cave at noon it could be seen that their dull yellow bodies were covered with dark spots; for they were cousins of the leopards. In later life they would be exactly like their mother, pure brownish yellow, of a somewhat lighter shade than their first coats showed.

Their heads were no longer too large for their bodies; their eyes were bright and wide open, and they began to frolic, tumbling about in the cave. Sometimes, at noon, they would go to its entrance and, poking out their little heads, look in wonder up, far up, where a streak of sunlight appeared on the dark cliff facing their home.

Young lion kittens cannot be kept forever in a cavern like that; it had no playground before it, but a sheer drop of twenty feet to the black river. The mother reached it, when she returned to them after hunting, by creeping, velvet-pawed, across the face of the cliff till she could halt on an outcropping ledge almost opposite the cavern. At this point the defile was so narrow that her leap carried her across to a rock just above her own door. By this way of approach to her home she avoided leaving a scent trail for hound

or wolf to follow. But there was an easier pathway leading to and from the cave. Moss had grown over the stones which jutted across the doorway, above, so that a kitten could clamber across them. Beyond and to the right was a rock slide, making a pathway down to a point within two feet of the river, and at the level of the stream a wide-mouthed cavern opened. When her kittens became so restless she could no longer keep them in their first nursery, one morning the Princess told them to follow her out into the world. One by one, keeping close to their mother, they clambered over the mossy rock and made their way down the rude staircase to Lion Creek. Here, in the wider cave, was their new home.

At first the kittens were frightened by the strangeness of the place, and kept close to their mother; and she was so uneasy she scarcely left them in two days.

No mischance came. Twice the Princess had gone and returned, to find all well; and now, her uneasiness modified, she began to teach her family to hunt. She caught a rat for them, greatly to the delight of the oldest of the three, a pretty

and venturesome kitten who was his mother's favorite.

It was not long before this little prince would leave the cave of his own accord and wander along the creek bank in search of mice, or slimy insects of the sort that frequent a black canyon.

Sometimes, in her love and fear for him, she would cuff him until he whimpered, for his running away. But always, as soon as her back was turned, around the bend of the creek, on her way to her hunting ground, her venturesome son would pop his head from the entrance of the cavern and be off to see what he could find.

But all through the time of melting snow and the month of catkins and bees no harm came to him.

CHAPTER II

Never eat meat you did not kill.

—MOUNTAIN LION WISDOM
Every Page

SOMETIMES, when starving, a mountain lion will eat carrion—but he always knows it is a foolish thing to do. That way lie traps and poison.

The eldest son of the Princess had not learned, as yet, the great cougar maxim, and kittens are not so clever as wolf-pups or young pronghorns; he was not easily taught. He was a handsome little fellow, and carried himself as if he were proud to belong to his family. He had, of course, a very impressive title—for he is called “King of American cats.” It would seem that anyone might be a little vain of such a distinction. But the common name of the Mountain lion is “Horse Thief cat”—which does not sound so well. The mountain lion was called “horse-thief” long ago because he used to prey upon the pack-animals of the early West.

He did far more damage than bears—which

ate different kinds of food. Therefore men crowded the lion back into the back canyons, while the bear can still flourish in Yellowstone Park.

Daintiness in regard to food may have led to the destruction of many of the mountain lion family; but it would have been much better for the little horse-thief cat, if he had learned to follow the family tradition before going out to walk alone.

One evening, at dusk, his mother went hunting as usual, and the little Horse-thief, as usual, waited till she had leaped the big boulder beyond the cave and climbed the cliff beyond, to disappear over the top. Looking up from the canyon bed, he could see a full moon directly overhead; and as cats of all sorts see well in the dark, he strayed, sniffing the earth for food or excitement, a long way up the canyon.

He was already beginning, in an awkward fashion, to practice the lion spring. When a mouse stirred in front of him, he crouched, just as his mother would have done, and his eyes gleamed wild in the night. But he did not get his baby claws on the mouse. He had by this time reached a place where the canyon broadened to

admit the moonlight. A white horse which had strayed from some ranch was cropping grass here, chewing with a loud noise, and pausing to blow the breath from his nostrils. When he saw the horse, old, savage feelings stirred in the little fellow's heart, and he crept forward on his stomach, exactly as if he had been large enough to leap on a horse.

He dared not even try; but his scent reached the horse, frightening it so that it clambered out of the canyon and ran home to its master.

The little Horse-thief went on. With all his stalking, he had caught nothing, and was beginning to be hungry, when he came upon a piece of meat.

No grown-up lion would have eaten this; something in his baby heart told him he should not touch it, but he liked the smell of it and was beginning to outgrow his milk diet; so he ate what some rancher had put out for the wolves. Nobody thinks of catching a lion with poison, except in starving times.

Poor little prince! He did not grow up to be a horse-thief—and it is to be feared that only an early death can keep one of his family

from that. Before he reached home he had become very ill, and crouched, moaning and whimpering, beside his two sisters.

Not many minutes passed before the Princess returned to see if all was well with her family. As she paused within ten feet of home she heard little whines of distress inside, and rushed in terror to her children. But her only son was beyond being helped by anything she could do. She licked him from head to foot; she coaxed him softly and begged him, in vain, to take his supper of milk. Even when he died she refused to abandon hope, and continued trying to warm his little body. The next morning she would scarcely notice her other kittens, but mourned for the dead one, and now and then, as she sat outside the cave where he lay, would call to him as if she thought he might answer her.

At last she seemed to understand that her kitten was dead. But she did not know just how it had happened; she thought the poison which had killed him had sought him out during her absence, and that she must now find a safer shelter for those which remained to her. Before night she made them follow her upstream to a place

where the river bank was impassable from rocks and slime. There, in a crevice of the cliff, she licked and comforted her remaining kittens. And from this time she gave them all the love which formerly was shared by three.

CHAPTER III

If you try a thousand ways of doing a thing, and then one more, it is likely that you will stumble on the right idea.

—MOUNTAIN LION WISDOM
Final chapter

THERE are animals that always use their wits. In every generation of coyotes, pronghorns, or pack-rats, no doubt some individual appears who devises a new way of escaping danger or getting food. If by good luck this is a female, she may pass the idea to her young ones. Cub or kid or baby rat will use it and improve on it later, and so in course of time the whole tribe will have become better able to get ahead in life. Even the bobcat seems to do some thinking when in a wild state—though it quite loses its head in captivity. Observers tell us the mountain lion is a clever hunter; but so far as anyone seems to know at present, the big royal cat has only three notions: to take care of its young and protect them with its life, to let alone everything it does not know about, and whenever possible to steal horses. If a mischance happens, it never knows what to do. Everyone who has seen one of them in cap-

tivity will have noticed how it tries space after space of its cage, moving everything that is loose, in the hope of discovering an opening. It is not clever enough to watch how the keeper comes in and outwit him, as a wolf would do; but it hopes, by trying a million ways, to get its freedom.

Yet, because of its strength and agility, it must be called the king of American wild beasts, and all the other animals, though much cleverer, tremble when it yells from its black canyon.

The Princess Felis spread terror, that season, among all the wild creatures, and the ranchmen grew very indignant about her attacks on their stock. She was wary, in her way, never touching anything she did not understand. One ranchman who lived in a river valley on the farther side of her canyon devised a clever way of protecting his sheep. Knowing that she could not cross the river at that point—for it was a wild rapid, lashing itself about a hundred sharp boulders—he first tried to remove a huge pine tree that had fallen across, bridging the current. When he discovered that he lacked the machinery for handling the huge trunk, he simply tied a large red handkerchief, which he had been wearing about his neck, around the fallen tree. That

bit of cotton cloth, with the man scent, was the best barrier which could have been devised. When mountain lions became troublesome in pioneer days, the sheep men used frequently to build log pens at the cost of great labor, only to find that these did not save their flocks. The Princess could easily have broken through a roof of logs; but she could not cross a red bandanna handkerchief fastened about a log—her book of wisdom forbade it. She never troubled that flock again.

But other ranch people were less fortunate. There was one man whose sheep were in constant terror. When they were eating peacefully in the mountain park, a sudden wind might blow their way, tainted with lion scent; then away would go the sheep, stampeding by a hundred different ways, through the passes of the hills. If the lion had really come to their pasture, she might have taken one; but their fear of her caused a dozen to fall victims to coyotes before the herders could collect the flock.

"We must contrive," said the rancher to his men, "a way to get that lion."

Even an old wolf may often be induced to take poison, since wolves like to experiment and may take a chance on meat tainted with some drug

they know nothing against. They are afraid of steel, but if a trap is carefully hidden and smeared with something to disguise the metallic odor, they can be tempted. The lion's policy of letting every strange thing alone keeps it from discovering new things which may be eaten and perhaps is not so good in the long run, but it does render killing or trapping *Felis* the horse-thief a difficult matter.

By using catnip, as a temptation, a ranger has succeeded in getting lions, in Colorado Springs.

Finally an old pioneer, who knew the nature of the animal, purchased a trap for the one who was raising kittens in the Black Canyon. The largest traps which could be obtained were placed in a circle surrounding a clear space where the Black Canyon opened toward the high level. None of the traps were baited, but each was secured by a rivet to a large log, so that the whole trap looked like a place which had been visited by a windstorm, felling a number of trees. At dusk of a lovely evening between spring and summer, a pig was brought to the spot and tied to a sapling in the center of the circle. The whole trap was three miles from any human dwelling, and by the advice of the old trapper, no one at-

tempted to watch near the place, lest Her Majesty the lion get the man scent on the wind.

The pig, left alone at the mouth of the Black Canyon, and not knowing that he was protected by a ring of steel traps, squealed till his voice cracked in his throat, and the lioness heard him, a mile away.

Now she approached the mouth of the Black Canyon and looked into the clearing. The pig was quiet, frozen with terror. It was just moon-rise, and the pale light from over the peak revealed her wild eyes and mighty chest and shoulders. She crouched, the beautiful muscles dimpling above her forelegs; then, straightening herself, she looked about her for any sign of danger.

Did she wonder why the pig did not run, but tugged at a rope which held it to a tree? At least the wind carried no scent of man—only a smell of fish from the river, and the odor of wild cherry bloom, like heliotrope in a garden. The Princess made a short run forward, and halted again; she was not yet within her spring of the game. Now she measured the distance with her eye; another run, of three feet, would carry her to the point from which she could calculate her

leap. The pig tore at his rope, almost strangling himself in an effort to escape and run for his own life from the lion. (And if he had succeeded, there would have been a sudden end of him, with no disaster to the Princess.) She made another little run forward. There was a faint, sharp click of metal; one of the trap logs moved a little and a sharp-toothed band of steel shut about the paw of the lion.

For a moment she flung herself against the log, clawing, spitting, screaming in mingled rage and terror, trying her great strength against the steel which made her a prisoner. Chips and dust of pine flew from the log. Rabbits, for a mile about, leaped from their forms or rushed out of their burrows and made their way across the mountain park. The pig, with a sudden mighty effort, wrenched a branch from the sapling to which he was tied and ran away, with the rope dangling from his neck. He did not stop till he had squeezed himself under a fence at the ranch and lay trembling in a corner of the dooryard.

By this time, the captive at the canyon's mouth had grown quiet. She knew that she was a prisoner—the steel of the trap was too strong for her.

Now that was a clever invention by way of a

trap. To loosen it from about the leg of a victim, a man must apply a crowbar to the spring at the front, and at the same time wrench apart two of the jaws. The cleverest wolf would never discover such a combination; the old trapper himself could not have opened its jaws without certain letterings by the manufacturers—"Press here," in one place, and "Push," with an arrow, in another.

As for the royal captive, she could not have opened the simplest type of rat trap, had one caught her toe. But she had great strength for her weight, which was not more than a hundred and ninety-five pounds. She found that she could drag the trap, with the log to which it was attached, across the clearing toward the Black Canyon in which she had left her kittens. She had no thought but to make her way back to them. The long trunk could not be rolled, since it was covered with snags and the beginnings of boughs which had been stripped off by the ax. Painfully and by main strength, going on three legs, the mother dragged it with her, past the mouth of the canyon, into the darkness.

Here the river plunged over its tall rocks and the pathway up the canyon was steep and diffi-

cult. At every foot of the way the log to which she was fastened caught on some snag, tree, or rock, and in every case she wrenched it free by main strength; for she was not clever enough to loosen it before trying to go on. So much time passed that the moon was high above the canyon, a white ship in a pale-blue sea of sky. It was midnight. By daybreak the men would be coming to look at their trap. But the mother was not thinking of herself. Already, in the dark of the canyon, far away, her kittens were beginning to whimper with hunger. When she remembered that they needed her, she tore at the log; her imprisoned foot was scraped bare of hair and skin, and there was blood on the steel band which encircled it.

But she could not move the old pine trunk, for she had come to the first bend in the canyon, where it was only twenty feet across, and her log was wedged against the rocks on either side. Just beyond this point a deep gulch, which carried water at flood time, entered the Black Canyon, running down from the sunny level of the park, where the quaking-aspens grew.

The Princess could hear the rush of water down this gulch, and the roar of mingling streams

where it joined the water of Lion Creek. Far above, where little pines grew at the rim of the Black Canyon, was a swish of night wind.

The moon sailed past the canyon. It was two o'clock. Already the Arkansas kingbirds back in the clearing were thinking of morning, waking and chattering together, and the daylight star had reached the horizon.

The Princess had been tearing, without a pause, at the log, ever since it first became wedged between rocks. Now a foot or two of its top end gave way, and with the momentum of it she plunged forward and rolled into the aspen gulch beyond.

Cats are not easily injured in a fall. Twice she rolled over with the log; then she plunged into the tops of some young trees; at last she found herself at the bottom of the gulch, the log up-ended and wedged fast in a crevice of the cliff.

Her imprisoned foot was now well off the ground, and the steel trap where she could reach it with her teeth. A weasel will gnaw off his trapped foot and go free on three legs. The Princess would have been glad to sacrifice the foot and fly to her kittens, but she did not think

of that plan. She could only fling herself, with all the power in her body, against the trap, and tear with her teeth at steel jaws they could never break. Hours passed. On the level above, it was growing light.

Her kittens would remain in their cave to-day. To-morrow, when hunger drove them to stray out and look for her, some coyote would pick them up, after making sure the mother was not about. The Princess tore at her leg till the blood ran down into the water below. But she could not free herself.

Now the trapper had come to the clearing a long way off, and she heard him hallooing to the sheepmen. "One trap gone!" he shouted. And the Princess cowered in the dusk of her gulch.

But she did not cease her work on the trap. A metal piece moved back and forth, constantly making her think she was breaking the trap. Bearing down with her shoulder, chewing the steel jaws in turn—since she could not hold the piece in place—she passed another hour.

Men crashed past the gulch in search of her hiding-place, but she made no sound to betray herself; a lynx, which is bolder than the bigger cat, might have spit at them. When they were

not able to locate the trap, somebody went to fetch a hunting dog from the ranch.

Soon the rocks resounded with the yelps of this small spotted brute. He was a good hound and promptly took the lion scent. With men and guns close behind him, he did not necessarily display great courage in trailing the lion, but he was certainly clever.

There were, of course, two trails, one which the lion had made approaching the trap, the other but a short time after. A good hound can generally be trusted to take the warmer scent. But in this case a pine log, rolling over the return trail of the lion, had added a confusing odor. At the mouth of the Black Canyon the hound hesitated, and finally took the colder trail.

This led far up upon the rocks. Now a heated argument took place among the men, just outside the gulch in which the captive Princess was trying to gnaw the steel teeth from a patent trap.

"That hound," one of the men declared, "has got off the lion scent and picked up a rabbit trail."

This roused the indignation of the dog's owner. His hound, he insisted, did not change trails.

"But no lion that ever was," the first man

insisted, "could drag a twenty-foot log up that slope." Then the hound "yarp-yarped" on his scent and dashed back to the edge of the river. He leaped the little gulch where water entered the Black Canyon, and proceeded, nose to earth, upstream toward the cavern in which the Princess kept her babies. Some of the men followed, breaking necks to keep the hound in sight; but the one who had sneered at the dog turned on his heel and went back to where he had left his pony. When he had mounted and returned to the ranch, the place was very quiet. Far away, up the canyon, the hound yarped on his trail. His voice had a bewildered sound now, since the mother had taken pains not to leave a clear scent as she came from her home the evening before. In a dozen places she had broken her trail, once or twice by jumping across where the stream was narrow; oftener by means of great leaps from tip to tip of the rocks along the stream. No dog could locate that home in the Black Canyon by following the trail of the mother.

Still, in the shadowy depth of the little gulch, the log fast in its crevice of the cliff, the Princess bit at the trap and turned the metal piece from side to side and back again. A thousand times

she flung the weight of her shoulder, like a crow-bar, against the spring-piece, a thousand times she bit the teeth of the trap where they clamped her flesh. Then she went through the performance once more.

She did not know how it happened. For some mysterious reason the steel jaws gave, she drew her torn and wrenched foot from the trap, and was free. That time she had chanced to press the catches in their proper order.

The Princess did not look behind her at the trap. She thought it might recover itself, spring and catch her foot again. A leap carried her to the other side of the creek; another into a wild passageway, partly under the earth and rocks, which led to her home.

A half mile from the gulch in which she had been a prisoner she met the men, with their spotted hound, returning from a fruitless search; and she cowered in a hole under a rock till they had gone by, then took her free way home to her kittens.

The men found that bloody trap in the aspen grove, fast to their twenty-foot pine trunk. And that is why the ranchman who lives three miles from Lion Creek insists to this day that the big

cat, if he is a horse-thief, is remarkably clever. "Why," he will say, "one of these mountain lions worked the combination to a trap that *I* couldn't handle, to save my life, without the directions."

But the king of American cats never acquired wisdom from the fortunate escape of the Princess. When she had comforted and fed her famished kittens that morning, she could only tell them over again, for she was a poor thinker, the bit of wisdom her ancestors had known when they used to steal the ponies of the Utes, long before the white men came to America:

"TRY A THOUSAND WAYS, AND THEN ONE MORE, AND IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE YOU MAY HIT UPON THE CORRECT METHOD OF DOING A THING."

*A Little Beast
That Saved*



CHAPTER I

If you do not work in summer, you will starve in winter.

—From the squirrel's part of the BOOK OF THE WOODS

THE wisdom of squirrels belongs both to the plains and to the woods, for squirrels are everywhere. It is a tiny, pocket volume which they learn to read, since their tribe is busy getting a living and laying something by for a rainy day. They have no time for study, they do not think of new plans for doing things, but act in much the same way year after year.

Mr. Lickety Chipp was a chipmunk.

Of course, though he had squirrel wisdom and was close of kin to the rock squirrels and the lovely gray tree squirrels, it would not be correct to say that he was quite of their family. The rusty gray overcoat he wore had five stripes on the back, and that of the squirrel who lived just the other side of a huge squawberry bush showed three. Five stripes on the back, and pockets for carrying odds and ends, made him a chipmunk. The pockets were inside his cheeks, and as he skipped about in the sunshine of an autumn day

almost any careless observer would have said his back had but two stripes. This was simply because three out of the five which distinguished it were almost exactly alike in color, and showed clearly in certain lights only. So that it is never easy to say at a glance whether an animal ought to be called "chipmunk" or "rock squirrel."

Both Mr. Chipp and his neighbor were wonderful savers. In the lovely sunshine of late summer they would shiver as they recalled days—sure to return to the hills—when the mercury fell to twenty below and the wildcat yelled at her hunting in the dead of night, so that all little beasts trembled in their holes; when, even if a squirrel should venture into the hungry forest to look for food, not a berry or a bug was to be had. It is a fearful thing to be overtaken by winter, with nothing laid by. When Mr. Chipp thought of the cold weather but two or three months away, he would fly to the scrub-oaks to test the acorns for storing.

He always lived on acorns in winter. During the hot weather, when the youngsters were growing up, there was never much worth putting away. Some chipmunks store nuts; but he did not live in the piñon belt, or near the Pacific



"IT WOULD BE WISE TO LAY BY AS MANY ACORNS AS POSSIBLE"

where almonds flourish. And the hillside above his home was dark and glossy with oaks.

His neighbor, the rock squirrel, had a pantry full of pine seeds, gathered far down the slope, before Mr. Chipp considered the acorns ripe. The asters were bright blue, the leaves of the aspens had begun to thin, and there was a reddish tinge on the oak leaves, when he began at last to lay by his winter supply.

Before it was fully light, on the first day of acorn harvest, he was out of his burrow and up the slope to oak bush. He scolded sharply, "Lick-et-ty, lick-et-ty!"—for he heard the cry of the big Lewis woodpecker. Presently its black plumage appeared, lighted with pink, and its small red face looked between the twigs of an oak. The bird was here for acorns! "Lick-et-ty! Chipp!" screamed Mr. Chipp, for he had always considered that he owned the scrub-oaks, since he had discovered them in the first place. That birds and other beasts might have discovered them before he did was too difficult an idea for him. His voice sharpened as he scolded, for if those woodpeckers took all the acorns, whatever would he do? He would have to crawl into his hole at the first snow, with nothing laid by at all!

He would be as poor, in the bitter weather, as the cottontail that shivers about the winter woods, gnaws the bark from trees, and is picked up, as like as not, by a coyote! As all these terrible possibilities occurred to Mr. Chipp, he ran half-way up a small tree, to order the intruder away. But since the black-and-pink bird paid no attention to him, he decided it would be wiser to be laying by acorns as fast as possible; and with a sudden shake of his tail, turning about in the tree, he ran straight down the trunk to his oak-bush, where there were acorns enough for many chipmunks and many birds.

With a fat nut in each pocket, Mr. Chipp raced back to his burrow.

He was quite proud of that house. From its small doorway, roofed by a flat rock, he went down several feet, through a narrow hallway. Then, turning sharply, he proceeded along an underground corridor and reached his living and sleeping room. Opening from this were two large pantries, each made up of many little cran-nies or compartments like a kitchen cabinet. He did not fling his burdens haphazard into the house, but stowed them neatly in the pantry at the right

side of his sleeping room. Then he scooted for the oak-bush once more.

The place was alive with squirrels of all kinds, and cock-o'-the-woods, red-headed woodpeckers, and more of the black-and-pink ones were feasting there; but Mr. Chipp wasted no more time in scolding; he harvested nuts.

If he was to get a peck, he saw, he must hurry. Before that day was over, his cheeks ached from burdens, his legs from running uphill, but he began to like the look of his pantries. They pleased him so well, as his store increased, that all the next day, whenever he had placed a few acorns, he would run about in a circle, for a few moments of sheer celebration, on the hard earth which formed his doorstep. Nobody, he thought, could ever find that burrow, to rob him. He had carried all the earth he took out in tunneling a long way off. And it would be warm here in December, with such a little door, sheltered from the winds, and that long double hall to break the force of draughts when the mercury stood twenty below.

Those days when Mr. Chipp was so busy about his harvesting, only a squirrel would have thought of winter. It was lovely Indian summer on the

mountain slopes, where bright blue and sulphur-yellow butterflies floated close to the warm grass. They, of course, would not live to suffer hunger in cold weather; but the cottontails, who seem never to know that winter will come, were basking in the sun as lazily as they did. Mr. Chipp sniffed at the rabbits as he went back to business.

That afternoon a small black bear came down the slope and frightened the squirrels from their work. But he did not remain long in the oak-patch; fond enough of acorns, he did not like the labor of gathering them one at a time, and so lumbered off up the mountain to stuff himself with ripe fruit from a choke-cherry tree.

Mr. Chipp returned to work doubly hard at his harvesting. During that beautiful weather he filled his right-hand pantry, and set eagerly about storing an equal amount of food on the left. He was always out of his bed before it was fully light, and racing uphill to work. Each day, when he went to bed, his back ached with toil, but his store grew more slowly than at first, for the birds and squirrels had almost stripped the patch of food. There came a day when morning frost whitened the grass, which afterward turned black in the sun, sharp reminder of the winter that was

on its way. Mr. Chipp was so uneasy he did not continue to glean in the oak-patch, but traveled uphill till he found a solitary scrub with acorns enough for himself. These he stored before dark, and his pantry was filled.

That night a high wind swept the hillside, shaking down showers of leaves. Mr. Chipp lay, worn out, in his burrow, and heard, above him, the rattle of bare limbs in the storm. His bones ached, his cheeks were sore, but he felt very happy and very proud.

CHAPTER II

To guard against robbery, do not put all you have in the same place.
—From the BOOK OF THE WOODS: squirrel's part

THERE are certainly some squirrels who know better than to keep all their winter food in one storehouse. Often, in dead of winter, the long-tailed gray tree squirrel may be seen to slip across the snow, going from horde to horde. And sometimes a wise member of the tribe has reason to pat himself on the back—which he can reach nicely with his tail—for his cleverness in keeping two pantries. Robbed by a bigger animal, or ruined by some landslide that has destroyed burrow and horde, he has only to skip away to his second storehouse and curl up, with plenty of food, for the winter.

For some reason, Mr. Licketty Chipp had not learned this old saw of the tree squirrels; every nut he possessed was under the flat rock by the squawberry bush. When he had finished his preparation for winter he thought he might take a short holiday. The wind which had blown the quaking-aspens almost bare brought a crisp,

pleasant day when the sun shone again. The air was not too hot or too cold. The paths of the woods were all gold light, from the sun shining through aspen leaves the color of daffodils. And that day a picnic party came to the hills.

Mr. Chipp did not care to make any human acquaintances—he was no tame chipmunk—but whenever he saw people eating upon a rock or boiling coffee over a camp fire, he thought of something pleasant. It seemed to him the most delightful thing in the world. He did not know where it grew; if he had learned where a bush of it could be found, he would have traveled for days to reach it. The smell of it made his tongue tickle and set all his whiskers quivering with excitement, though he had tasted it only once or twice in his life, and if a picnicker had desired to catch him, it could have been done with a few scraps of this wonderful dainty. Human beings call it *cheese*.

Mr. Chipp crept as near as he dared to the rock where the picnickers had their dinner. He lifted his paws to his nose; then he sniffed delightedly, for, without a doubt, he had got a whiff of cheese.

A boy in a red sweater leaped from the rock

and held out to him a bit of the yellow dainty; but Mr. Chipp was so alarmed by this familiarity, he backed away to a tree and hid behind its trunk. Then a girl in a blue tam begged: "Give it to him! Let him have it!" But the boy was obstinate. He continued to hold out the cheese and tempt Mr. Licketty Chip with its odor. He tossed it toward him, only to snatch it away just before Mr. Chipp got his whiskers on it.

Finally the temptation was so strong that Mr. Chipp actually twitched the cheese from between the boy's thumb and finger. Then, terrified, he fled to the top of an aspen and sat up on his hind legs to eat it, stuffing it into his mouth with his two forepaws.

In all this excitement about the cheese, he did not once think what might be going on that day at his burrow, where, with no police, and no lock on the door, he had left all he had in the world.

He was far from home, since the picnic party had halted for dinner near the motor road which wound up Big Thompson Canyon, past the cottages of summer visitors. The camps were all deserted now, and the chimneys cold; little remained but heaps of tin cans in the ditches. Loneliness and silence of winter were on the place.

Soon the bighorn and the mule deer would venture into the quiet camps.

The silence of the place was broken when all the picnic party climbed into their automobiles and began to blow their horns. The noise of these so terrified Mr. Chipp that he got down from his tree and fled, as fast as a chipmunk can go—down a gulch in yellow leaf, up many slopes and down again, past the old patch of scrub-oaks, bare of fruit, now, deserted—to the squawberry bush where he had lived so long.

And now—it was very strange—he could not find his burrow. The home of the rock squirrel was as it had always been, in a sheltered place between two ledges of sandstone, but the burrow with a flat stone for a roof, a little crack of an entrance door, and two pantries stored with acorns had disappeared without leaving a trace. Mr. Licketty Chipp walked thoughtfully around the squawberry bush; still there was no sign of a burrow. Only, in one place, a hole appeared, marked with the scratches of huge paws. A few acorns lay about in it, and there were some shells, damp and well chewed. Beside the hole lay a rock, upside down, so that he did not know he had seen it before.

How, he thought, had he missed his way? He looked about him in great bewilderment, and could see only a large black-and-white bird observing him with great curiosity.

She dropped into the squawberry bush, flirted her long tail from side to side, leaned out to look at the overturned rock and the hole, then exclaimed in a loud voice: "Ma-aa-g? Mag!"

Magpies do not go into holes in the ground to steal. Mag had not taken Mr. Chipp's acorns, but she had seen the robbery and was still very much excited about it, so she came out of the bush and walked up to the hole to look in, yelling again, at the top of her voice: "Ma-ag? Mag!"

Slowly the truth dawned upon Mr. Chipp. While he was away to dine on cheese, some one had overturned his flat roof, had broken down his pantry and stolen all that he had in the world.

He began to whimper, and then to cry outright, running about his ruined home, and each time he looked in breaking into fresh lamentations.

After a while he stopped crying and sat down to think. "Mag?" insisted the big bird, who knew all about the robbery, but could not tell,

since magpies and chipmunks speak different languages.

As Mr. Chipp thought about it, his wails were exchanged for sharp little squeals of anger. *Who* had robbed him of all that he had? His beautiful acorns, that cost him so much weariness! He brought his sharp teeth together with a click of rage. He would get that thief, bite him, and make him beg for mercy.

First he must find the rascal.

CHAPTER III

Never enter the burrow of a squirrel who is not a relative.

—From the SQUIRREL BOOK, chapter on "Manners"

EVERY chipmunk and squirrel knows that only kinsfolk can inhabit the same burrow; and there is no calling between strangers. At first glance, sometimes when we are in the woods, it seems that this rule is frequently broken. The beautiful gray tree squirrel has been found in the hollow trunk occupied by one with fur exactly like a black cat's; and there is a rusty brown member of the tribe who is on good terms with both black and gray. But the brown and black are really different color phases of the same species, so they can all be the best of chums. If Mr. Chipp had chanced to have a cousin close by, he might have been kindly welcomed in his distress and fed from the family pantry until spring. But he was a solitary chipmunk, with no relatives, that he knew of, nearer than the Big Thompson River.

Now the rock squirrel who lived under the squawberry bush was no cousin of his. While

the black or brown coat of the tree squirrel will make no difference to the gray variety, no squirrel who wears three stripes will associate with one carrying five. Mr. Chipp knew this perfectly.

But he saw, as he inspected the scene of his disaster, something which set him chattering with excitement—those damp, chewed acorn shells seemed to lead to the home of the rock squirrel.

Mr. Chipp had not a doubt in the world that his neighbor had robbed him. He chattered aloud with fury; he ran up a tree and down again; then he set out for his neighbor's burrow.

Sometimes the rule, "Never go into a stranger's burrow," is broken by a squirrel who is much larger than the neighbor whose house he invades; but his call is always a deadly insult which the other squirrel takes only because he cannot defend himself. When he saw Mr. Chipp approaching his door, the rock squirrel—old Colonel Three-stripes—met him with a growl of indignation.

Mr. Chipp replied with shrill yells which told the Colonel exactly what he thought of a squirrel who would break into a neighbor's house and steal all that he had. Probably the Colonel understood him after a fashion, as an American understands a Frenchman speaking broken Eng-

lish. He merely repeated his growl, which meant: "Keep out of my house. I don't associate with chipmunks."

"Scum of the earth!" yelled Mr. Chipp in return. And he walked into his neighbor's burrow to catch him red-handed with acorns in his pantry.

The Colonel bit him on the leg; Mr. Chipp bit the Colonel on the shoulder; then they clinched and rolled together out into the daylight.

The magpie, who dearly loved a fight, danced about in the squawberry bush, yelling "Mag!" so loud that she almost drowned the remarks of the chipmunk and the growls of the rock squirrel who answered him.

Like all rodents, both rock squirrels and chipmunks have exceedingly sharp teeth. Rodent teeth are soft at the core, but very hard on the surface; and they wear to needle-like points. Mr. Chipp was soon bleeding in several places, and as his neighbor was the larger squirrel, he began to see that he had made a mistake in entering his burrow. As soon as he could free himself, he turned tail on the Colonel and fled down-

hill to hide behind a rock in the gulch of aspens.

The sun was warm here; he lay licking the wounds made by the teeth of the angry old Threestripes. Never again, he decided, would he forget his manners.

And now, as he thought more coolly about the robbery, a new idea occurred to him. The Colonel, who was not quite a foot long, counting his tail, could not very well have overturned that flat rock which roofed the Licketty Chipp burrow. Perhaps he was really innocent; no doubt Mr. Chipp had been too hasty in accusing him.

Once more poor Mr. Chipp licked his wounds. The sun was low and he must look about for a place to spend the night. Without a roof over his head, or a scrap laid by for winter, heart-broken, sore, and bleeding, the once happy Mr. Licketty Chipp wandered down the gulch till he found a rock under which the earth was loose. With his paws he scooped out enough to make a hole that would admit his body, and in this shallow space curled up for the night.

It was a cold bed he had that night, for the wind swept under the rock, carrying, before morning, a little dust of snow, and Mr. Chipp

lay awake. On one question he pondered deeply:

If Colonel Three-stripes had not taken his property, *who was the thief?*

Note: The Rock Squirrel is called "Ground Squirrel," in some localities.

CHAPTER IV

If a thief has left a very large track, it is better to drop the case.

LEADING directly away from the wrecked burrow under the squawberry bush were some curious tracks. Any person who has climbed mountains in the Western United States or in the less settled portions of the East, near the Canadian border, will have seen, where the earth is soft, tracks which look almost as if they had been made by human feet. They are too large for that; the gashes made in the earth by enormous toe nails can usually be seen where the soil is best for taking footprints; and there may be an impression of long hair around the foot. Also, it will have sunk deep into the soil, from the great weight dependent upon it. It is perfectly plain that a track like this was made by a plantigrade animal—or one that walks setting down its entire foot, not, like the wolf or the horse, on its toes. There are very few plantigrade animals in our woods. One is the raccoon, which leaves beside rivers and irrigating ditches a footprint like the impression of a baby's hand spitting the

mud. The 'coon could never have made those tracks leading away from Mr. Chipp's wrecked home, nor could he have moved the rock. So any sensible jury would have cleared his character. There was really only one creature in the woods who could possibly have committed the robbery.

When morning came, Mr. Chipp went again to see his old home; he was hoping he might have been mistaken. Perhaps his burrow, with its well-stocked pantry, remained as he had left it just before noon the day before. He might have failed to locate it; perhaps he had not been robbed at all.

A brief examination showed that there could be no mistake about the robbery; he had lost everything that he had; and now he saw the tracks which led away from the scene. But instead of following them to take his revenge on the thief, Mr. Chipp ran down into the gulch and hid for an hour.

The magpie also was awake, and she had not forgotten about the robbery. While she is in mortal fear of big hawks, nothing without wings has any terror for her, and she set out to follow the trail which had so alarmed Mr. Chipp.

The great tracks led down into the gulch, striking it some fifty yards above Mr. Chipp's ruined home, in the sand of a dry watercourse. They wound between silver trunks of aspen trees, and finally emerged to climb a hill. Here the earth was so hard and slippery with pine needles, that the trail seemed to disappear. Whether the magpie followed it, or was guided in some other way to satisfy her curiosity, would be hard to say. She flew straight up the mountain and came into wild and rocky country. Here, once more, the huge tracks of the robber appeared, making down a waterway between two cliffs. Under a sheltering ledge, where leaves and pine needles had blown in for a mattress, some large animal had slept the night before. He was up now, and taking his way across a ridge, to get a drink from a pool the rains had left on a rock below.

Mag saw him lumbering over the edge of the hill. He would have more fat, to keep him warm when he went to sleep for the winter, from his feast in Mr. Chipp's house. The 'winter's supply for a chipmunk had been merely an extra meal to him. He was, in fact, that same little black bear who had not cared for the labor of picking acorns one by one on the day he fright-

ened all the little harvesters away from their patch of oak brush. He may even have thought, when he went away on that occasion, it would be pleasanter to wait and have his acorn-picking done by some hardworking chipmunk.

“Ma-ag? Mag!” yelled the black-and-white bird, and teetered on a rock as she screamed at the thief. The bear did not mind Mag; he lumbered on to the pool, and every time he remembered Mr. Licketty Chipp’s acorns he chuckled to himself.

For there is one idea which no animal seems to have: that to rob those who are weaker and smaller, even though they may belong to another family, is a mean and cowardly thing. The law which says the strong should try to help the weak because they are weak is not written in any of their books, but it is in every good and honest human heart.

CHAPTER V

Don't cry about your losses if you can do anything toward repairing them.

THAT was a frosty day, after the snow; but the sun came out and the few aspen leaves which remained danced in a very pleasant breeze. It was now the first day of October, and October is bedtime for chipmunks. While some of the tribe have a way of venturing out of their burrows on warm days during the winter, most of the time between September and April is passed dozing and eating under the ground.

Mr. Licketty Chipp had no underground home into which to creep. Moreover, relations were very much strained between himself and Colonel Three-stripes; so he took his way up the gulch, that morning after the robbery, in search of a vacant burrow.

Without finding a place where he could lodge, he came almost to the Big Thompson. Now he could hear the roar of the river beyond, and he saw pine cones in which a few seeds remained. But to store enough of these tiny things meant

many days of labor, and the sky had the hazy look, along the tops of the hog-back mountains, which always indicates the coming of a big snow. The peak was very white. And as a matter of fact a blizzard was not twenty-four hours away.

All the summer birds were gone. Flickers and long-tailed chickadees called from the boles of pine trees as Mr. Chipp took his way up a slope in the direction of an abandoned village of summer cottages.

Under the edge of the hill, just beyond where tin cans left by the summer tourists lay rusting on a dump, he came upon something which looked as if it might help him out of one of his difficulties. It was a burrow, deserted by some little creature who had not cared to live near human beings. There were two doors, both sheltered from the wind and snow, so that if the little householder should be chased home by some enemy, he could enter by the nearest way. The entrance Mr. Chipp approached was so narrow, and low, that he was compelled to flatten his body against the earth.

In the large living and sleeping room was little light and air, but Mr. Chipp was no fresh-air crank, himself. It would be warm in bitter

weather, since it opened from a passageway and lay a foot or two beneath the surface. Scattered here and there were husks of seed eaten by the former tenant; and as his eyes grew accustomed to the twilight of the vacant dwelling Mr. Chipp saw a patch of dark gray hair scraped off at the entrance. He had entered the burrow of a wood rat.

He was delighted to find so commodious a house for the winter. When he emerged into the light again, he was confronted by a huge pile of sticks, old scraps of tin, and bits of glass—stuff which wood rats bring home to decorate their front yards. While Mr. Chipp did not care for decorations, the heap served to protect one of his doorways from the wind. He skipped gayly about the pile of rubbish and perched upon a rock to think. Chipmunks cannot sleep all winter, like bears, without food. Where, where could he hope to find anything to eat?

Behind the mountain the blue-gray snow haze was thickening; and birds called to one another, "Flick-er! Flicker!" about the coming blizzard. Weeds about the wild-rose thickets were bare of seeds. Once Mr. Chipp remembered, sadly, his beautiful acorns; but it is a waste of time to sit

and mourn for things one has lost. There was really but one possible course for him. The pine forest was a long distance from his new home, and there would be few seeds in the cones, but he might, by great diligence, collect enough to feed him for a few weeks. There would be warm days during the winter, when he could work, and so, perhaps, keep life in himself till spring. Without further delay, Mr. Chipp set off, across the dump heap near the cottages, in the direction of the forest.

Half concealed by an old aluminum kettle with a leak about its spout lay a small, round thing, of a light-brown color, and shaped like an almond. A certain odor which clung about it suggested that it might be worth investigating as food. Mr. Chipp had never eaten anything of the sort; but he took it between his forepaws for examination. The woody shell with which he came into contact was hard even for the needle teeth with which he had attacked old Colonel Three-stripes. He nibbled an end of this away, working very fast and scarcely pausing to spit out the bits of woody fiber. Sitting on his hind legs, his forepaws rapidly turning the nut, he came at last to a sweet and nourishing kernel of

an odd but interesting flavor—he had, in short, discovered an apricot pit. And not merely one! The summer cottagers had eaten many apricots, and gallons of pits lay on the dump. There were also seeds of the blue prune, and cherry stones. So sensible a business person as Mr. Chipp saw at once the advantage of using what lay nearest his home. He stuffed a large seed into each pocket and was off in a flash to his home. The bear had eaten all his earlier harvest, but he had at least learned how to store food for winter. The wood rat had not kept his pantry according to Mr. Chipp's ideas, but he worked with such neatness and dispatch that he very soon packed all the available space with good food from the dump. He took no cracked or gummy pits—that sort of haste makes waste. Every nut in his pantry was sound.

He scarcely took time to sleep, during this late harvest. Indeed, when he finished gathering his winter food the first flakes of the storm were falling, and he was glad to skip into his warm sleeping room and curl up for a long nap.

That was a heavy snowfall. All the mountain gorges were filled to the level and two feet of snow lay above Mr. Chipp's burrow, burying deep

that pile of sticks and broken glass which the wood rat had thought so beautiful. For two days the snow fell. There were no chores for Mr. Chipp, no alarm clock broke his long nap. After the snow the mercury fell to thirty below and there came a terrible night on the mountain. Stars were sharp and white in a black-velvet sky. When Mr. Chipp stirred in his burrow, he heard the yap of coyotes at their hunting. But he had no need to venture out into their path. He grew drowsy. On the third day at sunset a weird kind of music mingled with his dreams and lulled him to sleep. Over his head three coyotes were singing their own tune, with noses pointed toward the sky.

When the sun shone next morning, a little light came through the snowbound doorway of Mr. Licketty Chipp. He woke early and greatly enjoyed his breakfast; and as he sat up in the burrow, peeling the hard shell from a prune seed, he said to himself:

"Well, I'm certainly glad I saved when I could."

*The Life Struggle
of a Mule Deer*



CHAPTER I

In order to win, in life, a creature must remain in the right place.

—From the BOOK OF THE WOODS

Page One

THE book of the woods is a very great work, written by the God of all living beings for those creatures who spend their lives in the forest, who hide in copsy places from their enemies, and live with the trees for their teachers. Forest animals cannot live in the open plain; and though a mule deer, just like a human being, will sometimes leave the place where he belongs, the end of such mistakes is disaster.

Twin fawns were born, in the spring of one year, far up the canyon of the Platte in Colorado. Their beautiful mother laid them in a grove of quaking-aspens overlooking a wild little tributary of the river, then went to browse for her living, back in the wooded gulches.

It was a lovely home thus selected for their infancy. The stream close by them was cold with melting snow, and whipped to a white froth, like egg whites, around its dark and pointed

rocks. Opposite the grove rose a cliff with patches of green moss that looked like ornaments of satin tapestry on a wall. Around the cradled fawns were the white trunks of the aspens, and the sun, shining through, made a dapple of brightness and shadow. It was for this the place had been chosen. While he is not actually spotted, like some of the European fawns, the young of the Colorado deer has a faint dapple, like shadow and sun, on its hide—not quite evident unless it is in the sun, but making it almost invisible to the eye as it lies under the quaking-aspens in their flickering shadow. Perhaps young deer do not really appreciate the beauty of their home; but it is certain that they love it dearly. If one is taken from the river and the quaking-aspens, and reared on a ranch, it is sure to find its way back to the place for which it was born.

The little fawns, as they lay still against the old leaves, would scarcely have been seen by the keenest observer crossing the grove. The human mother dresses her baby in the loveliest things she can make or buy; she prepares a carriage quilt of pink or blue satin, so that he may catch the eye when taken out on the Drive. And when he grows up and goes into business, he will print



"SHE WAS A GOOD MOTHER."

advertisements in the paper—anything rather than to be unnoticed. That is just where the deer is different. He belongs to the woods, and all woods creatures want to slip through the world unseen. To this end, the mother of the twins had told them on no account to stir, since movement is what catches the eye of a passer-by. Fawns, when born, have no animal scent. The keenest wolf nose cannot find them out among the leaves, but there is the mountain lion, who hunts with her eyes.

The "lion" is really one of the leopard kind, a great, sneaking brute, that seldom attacks anything of nearly its own size. It is in such deadly fear of man that an unarmed person can snatch its food from it in its own mountain gulches. But the helpless fawn is its favorite victim.

From the depths of a black gulch to the west of the quaking-aspens, issued its peculiar yell, a kind of threat in it, and at the end a wail of anger or distress. Both the fawns heard, and the blood set back in terror to their baby hearts. One remained motionless, not a twitch of his limbs betraying the horror he felt; but the other lifted her head. That was just the difference, always, between the fawns, and that is why one may as

well be called Captain, from the start, while the other, with all her beauty, was always Lady Undecided. When Lady Undecided observed the Captain's behavior, she immediately imitated it and was as quiet as he; but the fact remained, she had not known where she was safe.

It was a pretty hard test, for fawns, to hear a lion. Nothing in the woods is more hideous than that shriek—and wail—which the rocks always take up and repeat, as if they want no wild creature to forget that in the nearest black canyon a lion is suckling her young. Of course the lion has her weakness. Like most all deceitful creatures, she is really lacking in resourcefulness and can be outwitted. Besides, she never dares leave her sunless gorge in the daytime; and after she had yelled, to the terror of the fawns, their enemy only shrank farther into her crypt. All was still again, except for the snarl of the stream about its bowlders, and the spring song of a water ouzel with a nest under the rocks by the bank. The twins were not the only deer cradled in the aspen grove. Another doe had left her fawn there, and he was of that curious, investigating turn of mind which is described when we say of any person, "He doesn't know when he is well

off." This trait crops out now and then in the woods, but is never passed along from parent to child, for the reason that the sort of wild creature who will not stay where he belongs is not likely to live very long. The fawn that lay near the twins was very anxious to better himself, and besides he was ready to trust any sort of person who came along. It is not pleasant to lie motionless and without any sort of amusement, hour by hour. Better far if one could follow one's mother through the woods. The fawn with the investigating turn of mind became exceedingly restless.

Presently there strayed in that direction a range cow. Lady Undecided glanced hopefully at her, thought about it, looked at her brother, and laid her head down. The Captain had not stirred.

Switching her tail at the yellow flies which torment cattle in the hills, the cow approached the cradle of the youngster who was now to show himself an Easy Mark. She was quite a motherly-looking person, and with his extreme optimism about anything which offered a change, the Easy Mark relied on her at sight. When he rose, on long, feeble legs, and trotted after her, she did not drive him back, as his own mother would have done. He trotted happily beside her,

and got no attention at all except as now and then her tail struck him across the eyes.

With the sublime confidence of all Easy Marks, the youngster gamboled across a flat space near the grove and descended to the level of the river, where grass was good and the bellowing of a herd of mountain steers echoed among the rocks of the farther side. What happened afterward was never known, for he never came back to the aspen grove. His mother did, when she thought he would be hungry, and she mourned long and bitterly the loss of her only child. But the wolf, bobcat, or eagle that knew his fate kept the secret. The twins had a vague sense of it, or a feeling that all was not well with the Easy Mark, as they waited patiently for their own mother.

She was a good mother, one of the energetic sort of deer who make a good living and protect their families, though it is to be feared she got little help from her lord the stag. The twins grew rapidly on an abundance of milk. Very soon, as is usual with the young of thrifty and sensible does, they were using their teeth for themselves, on the shoots of mountain fruit trees. And all through their period of dependence they were not molested by enemies. For the deer has

a wonderful gift, and keeps out of sight as by a miracle in the strange and lovely underworld to which he belongs. They spent their days with the mother in the flickering twilight of leaf shadow, and drank, in the sunset hush, not where the river lay pink with evening light, but from dim pools under the gooseberry bushes at its edge, or where rain water had collected in cup-shaped basins of the rock. They went their way unseen. The summer passed, the aspen leaves were pure gold, shining like angels in the gulches. Kinnikinnick reddened its berries, and all the vines grew gay on the cliffs. Then there was frost, high up, where the twins had been born, and the deer came tiptoeing down from the peak. The mountain park which lay below was now deserted by tourists and ranchmen. There was plenty of browse along the Platte itself, but since that is no safe place until after the October hunting season, the little family went first to the valley of a small tributary called Deer Creek. Later, when the big snows came, they crowded with others of their kind, into the gulches of the Platte Valley, for shelter. The deer weathers Rocky Mountain winters because he is not merely a grazing animal, but can eat the young shoots of trees.

It is the cattle of the rancher that suffer cruelly in the mountains in winter.

The twins reached the end of their first season in good condition and quite able to look after themselves; but here they were faced with the first great problem of their lives—their mother had become neglectful. That love should fail them was a bitter experience. When she went to the peak, with the first warm weather, they followed close at her heels, wondering, in their dumb, soft-eyed way, at the change which was taking place in their world.

They were not especially sensitive, and did not perceive for some time that their society was quite annoying to her who had once been so fond of them. But one evening she slipped away so quietly that they were unable to find her.

That night they slept by themselves under the buck brush high on the mountain-side. Little cedars of the upper slopes whispered around them. For every wise deer, even a young one, knows it is not best to sleep under the tall pines. The mountain lion stretches herself on its limbs, to spring. There was a full moon, washing everything on the mountain with that whiteness which is like the transparent wash sometimes put over

a water-color drawing. Now and then a shadow slipped across the clearing as some beast of prey went abroad. None of these discovered the bed of the twins.

But they were uneasy, and their hearts sore. It is said that the mule deer has a cruel and embittered temperament. In later life he is inclined to be treacherous, and will sometimes murder another stag, or his human keeper in a park. But it is a hard world into which a young deer is cast, and likely to ruin his temper. Some herd animals rear their young much more kindly—as in cases where the father takes a part of their care. The Captain knew perfectly that he had no friends among the older deer. He was a strong and ambitious youngster, who might at any time aspire to be a ruler of the deer, and he would meet with about as much kindness, if he tried to establish himself with a herd, as a young prince did in the court of King Richard III. The little doe—Lady Undecided—might, if she had wished, have found shelter with her kind, for the old deer never seem to feel the same jealousy of does. Often, when they are beset with enemies in the hunting season, they will choose a doe for

their leader, and it is said by hunters that she makes a much better general than the stag.

Knowing that an old stag would probably kill him on sight, the Captain had selected as a sleeping-place a slope where there were no deer trails. Lady Undecided left all plans and arrangements to him, and the one hope of both their hearts was to find their mother.

In the dimness just before dawn the Captain peeped from his shelter of brush, and where the moon shone white on the rocks, he saw the life-long enemy of deer. For they are never free from the menace of the mountain lion until man moves up the mountain and drives the big cat away. (Then man hunts the deer for himself.) The mountain lion is a woods creature herself, built to take advantage of the weakness of all deer. She knows they cannot see far, like the antelope; that they are timid, after the fashion of forest creatures who pass their lives in hiding; that they do not resist panic well, or fight in defense of each other.

The cat tribe, also, has its weaknesses. For example, cats hunt by sight and hearing rather than by scent. Young though he was, the fawn understood this, and knew that while he remained

close to the ground in the black shadow of the buck brush he was safe. The cat lashed her tail from side to side. Then she crouched to spring, and leaped, where she had seen a cotton-white tail in the night. A wild rabbit cry broke the stillness of the hush before daybreak, as another small career ended in defeat.

But no person who really expects to make a success of life can permit himself to be robbed by panic of a night's rest. While his sister lay shuddering beside him, the Captain took another nap, and did not wake till the sky was pink with dawn.

The lion was back in her black canyon, the place where she hides from man. Rising, the Captain shook the dead leaves from his flanks and stepped into the open of a mountain clearing.

In this early daylight flowers and trees looked gray as pencil lines in a drawing. The mariposa lily had opened where there was long grass, the painted-cup waved on a slope above, but they had no color yet. Shadowy and gray as the flowers, the young deer slipped down to a stream to drink.

Suddenly the sun shot across a high ridge, revealed their beautiful eyes, brought out the drab and white of their coats. Now, in a moment, the

mariposa was white and green, the painted-cup the brightest scarlet in the world. Purple and gold and red and green and blue, the earth looked as if some artist had just colored the scene with his brush. But the deer do not love bright day. They slid away under the buck brush, to pursue their search for the mother, who, they still believed, could not have forgotten or ceased to love them.

They searched a long while, up and down the canyon of the creek near which they had slept. Since they were afraid to pass through any open spaces, their path was a devious one, under vines and brambles, where they had to creep along the ground. As they made their way up and up the mountain, the Captain constantly sniffed the wind for a taint of some enemy, or halted to listen for any menacing sound which might be covered by the velvet rustle of pine boughs and the roar of the river. Once he caught a swish of undergrowth in a gulch far below. He stopped, he sniffed, widening his velvet nostrils till the air brought a scent. The intruder was only a horse that had strayed from a ranch up a little gulch filled with aspen trees.

At last the twins came in safety to a grove near

the headwater of the Platte. The place had been their own cradle, but they had probably forgotten that circumstance. They saw only that a capable and thrifty doe lay on the ground where a flicker of leaves from the aspens served to veil the tiny object beside her. With delight, the twins rushed to their mother.

But a low, threatening note came from her. To their amazement, they saw beside her a fawn not three hours old; and another, half covered with leaves from last year, rested in a slight depression of the soil.

Gradually the twins were made to understand that they were not wanted in the nursery. They did not know where to go, and for a time hung sorrowfully about. At last they went away.

The Captain took the lead. Embittered by that day's experience, he felt in his heart the creed of the deer—everyone for himself.

During their first day of independence they browsed along the stream in safety. It was with nightfall that a crisis approached; for they found themselves at the edge of an open space, or mountain park, running from the rougher slope of the peak down to the river. Parks are not the place for deer, because ranged over by pack ani-

mals. Deer are not built to cope with the pack. All their habits put them at a disadvantage, and a few wolves can destroy even so powerful a deer as a moose, if they wait for the proper conditions. One of the common precepts of the book of the woods will read, "Beware of the pack"; and wolves, or even coyotes, can be met to much better advantage by the pronghorn with his swift legs and superb eyesight, or even by the jack-rabbit on the plains. A deer intended by nature to survive and prosper will never try to cope with the wolf, unless in those coverts where he can kill his scent at any time by crossing a stream, and then vanish in his copses.

But Lady Undecided wished to cross the clearing, to where, near a grove of pines, a little mountain lake shimmered in the moonlight. Both were thirsty, and far from the river; so they tiptoed to the end of a little gulch thickly grown with aspens, and peeped from cover.

Their two heads were a pretty sight: the doe's with her wide eyes and sensitive nostrils, tasting the wind; the Captain's beginning to show horns that would be powerful antlers one day—if he was to live to maturity.

On the moon-washed plain all was quiet; here

and there a cedar was visible, with a black shadow around it; and close by one of these lay a solitary gray wolf, alone, as is the fashion of pack animals, who do not seem to care for one another's society, but join their forces when there is a prospect of plunder. The watching wolf knew that a dozen more were within sound of his voice. He hated them; they hated him. If he were down, they would cheerfully pick his bones. Yet he could depend on them to obey his summons to the hunt. The pack animal never fights alone, and so seldom follows the deer into the copse, where a powerful stag might very well dispose of a dozen, one by one.

The wolf got the scent of the deer, and then saw them at the edge of the covert. A lion would promptly have stalked them; he lay motionless as they lifted their heads, peering across to the lake. It was not yet fully dark; daylight and moonlight were mixed in the great cup formed by hills that rose on all sides of the water.

Trust a pack animal not to be heard and to keep where the wind would not betray him! The Captain sniffed, hesitated, looked uneasily across that open space which his instinct bade him leave to the rabbit or the pronghorn. For a moment

the two fawns shouldered each other, breathless, in sight of the lake.

Then one of them left the cover of aspens and the other remained. Softly, lifting her pretty feet high, turning her head from side to side, the Lady Undecided took her way across the park, where, she observed, was no pine tree that might shelter a lion. Once she halted, as if expecting the Captain to follow her, and, when he gave a low note of warning, half turned back to cover.

But all was so still and pleasant, in the moonlight, that she finally went on, still uneasy and not wholly committed to her course.

Without any adventure, she reached the lake and bent her head to drink. Then suddenly the pack yell rose around her and five gray forms darted from behind rocks and trees to the attack. She turned to fly back to the copse where she had left the Captain, changed her mind, and started around the lake, where there was no possible chance for her except in a straightaway race. There are fleetier creatures than the mule deer, but she seemed to imagine that she could make the pace of a pronghorn.

She was soon wild with terror, the pack snapping at her heels or running before her to reach

her throat. She knew that she ought to have remained in cover, and tried to reach a place, at the edge of the lake, where some dark trees came down to the water's edge. Their shadow received her from sight, and the other twin, from his hiding place, saw her disappear. A few moments later he noticed how the pack cry had changed in tone, growing sharp with excitement. A little while after, all was still. And the Captain never learned the rest of the story.

CHAPTER II

Do nothing till you see what the other fellow will do.

—FROM THE BOOK OF THE WOODS
Part II

WHEN the Captain had acquired his first year's horns, with a store of bitter experience, he may be said to have reached the second part of the book of the woods. Now and then he hung about the places where old and successful stags held sway. The older ones, petty dukes, were morose and savage; every one of them saw before him old age, surrender, and ruin, and was obsessed with the passion of the old—to keep what he had got. It was not yet time for the Captain to fight for a place in the inner circle of his tribe; but, as he was particularly clever and wary, he soon became the leader of a few youngsters who traveled the mountain paths and browsed along the streams together. These backward and persecuted youngsters had to avoid three things: the deer trails, the homes and roadways of men, and the black canyons where the lion had sway. There are always far too many

young stags starting in the business of life. Nobody seems to want them but the hunters and the lions—and they lead hard lives until they can make themselves of importance in their world.

The late summer came, with leaves growing yellow in the quaking-aspen grove, and with well-grown lion kittens straying out of their caves in the black canyons and almost ready to be hunting for themselves. In the last week of August that year there was a harvest moon which brightened as the sunset faded every night. The young bucks who followed the Captain had gathered one evening in a little glade between some large squawberry bushes and the dark, squat junipers that formed outposts for a grove of evergreens.

The leopard-lion knows perfectly well how quick are the huge ears of the mule deer, to catch every sound in the hills. In spite of the noise of the Platte, breaking a twig would betray her, and she crept toward the little group in the glade over pine needles that were smooth as the ice on a quiet lake in winter. They heard nothing but the sleepy twitter of half-grown robins, roosting on a limb in charge of a faithful father, the flutter of a bat's wing, and the dropping on a rock surface of small, bluish berries from a juniper.

She swung noiselessly into the moonlight, and selected her victim—the Captain.

She broke no twig, uttered no sound, for the cat trick of yelling to frighten a victim is only for the young and helpless. But a cottontail that had seen her in the moonlight ran down the wind in terror, so that they turned their heads.

In a flash, the deer had vanished under dark boughs of the juniper—all except her selected victim.

No deer leader will risk his life for the sake of the rest; with them it is each for himself. But the Captain stood motionless as an iron deer in a park, and allowed the cat to stalk him. She calculated her spring, drew back a bit, lashed her sides with her tail, while the muscles tautened in her limbs and her velvet shoulder looked white in the moonlight. She was an old huntress, and knew exactly how far the leap would carry her. A lion has only two hunting paces—the spring, upon a motionless animal, and that running leap with which she overtakes a victim in flight. She now sprang.

Her claws, which should have ripped the flesh from the deer's shoulder, got only pebbles and dead leaves on the earth. At the instant of her



"ONE DAY A STRANGE DEER STRAYED OVER THE EDGE OF THE MOUNTAIN"

leap the young buck had slipped backward almost on his haunches. Before she could right herself he was off, and could be heard, as she looked about her, crashing through the underbrush on his way to the river.

To wait in time of danger until the enemy begins to act is a hard lesson from the book of the woods. Many young bucks could not have resisted the temptation to fly when stalked. Knowing just how far the lion would go had saved the Captain and had proved that he was fitted for a successful life in the forest.

All was still on the mountain slope—black shadows under the buck brush, white light on the ridges. Here and there in a thicket some great one of the deer tribe rested with his family of followers. Far away, dying off in the distance, could be heard the flight of the persecuted youngster who had just matched his wits with the lion.

CHAPTER III

Autumn is the time for play.

—From the MULE-DEER'S BOOK OF THE WOODS

THE time had come, when the Captain could no longer be called a fawn. The dapples which had appeared when he was a baby were all gone from along his spinal column; his black nose was less pronounced, as were the dark patches on his flanks, and he could not now conceal himself by curling up in the flickering shadow of the leaves. But he no longer needed the baby protection, for he no longer lay still. When he was not out getting a living, he wanted to be at the sports with which young deer amuse themselves. His antlers were simpler than those of old stags, but he was proud of them and enjoyed trying his strength with every youngster he met. One by one he defeated the members of his own band, and that was great fun. One day a strange youngster strayed over the edge of the hog-back mountain and challenged him to a wrestling match, and the Captain was delighted to join horns with him.

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Back and forth they rocked and swayed—where golden leaves of the cottonwood drifted around them like showers of petals in the spring. The stranger had a stout neck and pushed the Captain hard, till both young deer were greatly excited.

Now in a deep glade of the hills the Captain had seen something which had caused him to run away in terror, though he did not know exactly what it meant. The skeletons of two deer lay there, bleached by the snows of a dozen winters, gnawed by wolves and coyotes, and their antlers were fast locked together. Long before the Captain was born these two young deer had engaged in a wrestling match, and in the excitement of the game had not noticed that the tines of their antlers became crossed. When they were tired of play, they had tried to back away from each other, only to find that they were fast fixed together. For days and weeks afterward they had tried futilely to free their horns. Neither could eat. Had it been a few weeks later in the year, one might have managed to shed his antlers, but in September they are too firmly fixed to be dislodged from the head; so the youngsters who had

joined in a playful sparring match had died together.

The Captain pushed harder, trying to ram his opponent against a great boulder. Now and then he would give a little snort of pleasure, as much as to say, "Now will you own you're beaten?" For it began to be plain that he was the stronger deer and sure to win in the end.

Slowly, surely, the stranger was forced backward until his hind legs scraped the rock and his thick young neck was aching from resistance. With a sudden flirt of his antlers he attempted to free himself. Then, by way of admitting defeat, he would turn tail and run.

Horn scraped on horn, sending a shivering noise to the ears of the Captain. A sudden panic took him, he flung back his head with such force as to lift the front feet of his antagonist from the ground. But he did not succeed in freeing his antlers. Now back and forth swayed the two deer, with horns interlocked. The wind had risen; golden rain of cottonwood leaves fell on them through the dust they stirred. It was late in the afternoon. A coyote came from a hole between the rocks and peered with sharp eyes,

and inquisitive nose tasting the wind, at the now trembling deer.

He crept nearer the hind legs of the Captain, and the young deer stamped impatiently, then flung himself with all his might against his opponent, and twisted his mighty neck to fling his head toward the sky and free himself—all in vain. They struggled at the edge of a cliff from which they could look into gold tops of quaking-aspen trees and see below the trees bright blue water of a little mountain stream.

Again, noiselessly, his stomach flat to the ground, the coyote crept upon the defenseless deer. He snapped furtively at the Captain's flank, and the Captain, in a rage, tried to wheel upon him. The fury of his effort pushed his opponent from the trail and the Captain felt the pull of his weight upon his neck. Then the other deer fell, stumbling, bruising himself against the rocks, sliding half his legs deep where rock slide covered the cliff—down toward the aspen tops and the bright blue thread of water. But the Captain remained on the trail. Looking down, he saw his late antagonist pick himself up from a clump of buck brush, look about him, and make

away up stream as fast as his legs could move. The Captain turned on the coyote.

Somehow, as the strange young deer slipped from the trail, the right angle had been turned by those tines which had interlocked, and the wrestlers freed in a moment. The coyote had not expected such a result; the Captain struck once, and missed; then the coyote was off, a yellow-gray streak across the trail to cover.

Pausing now and then to remember the plight from which he had rescued himself, shuddering from neck to tail, the Captain turned down the cliff. At the foot of it he drank, still trembling so that his nose raised great bubbles on the stream. He browsed, for his evening meal, on the leaves of bushes beside the water, and finally took his way toward a certain favorite cover of buck brush, where he usually slept. The sun, shining through the quaking-aspens, made the air pure gold; the asters were blue stars in this bright wash of light. A flicker called joyfully, and the long-tailed chickadees swarmed on a lightning-killed tree, calling sweetly to one another. In one place lay the skeletons of two deer, with locked antlers—but the Captain did not stop to look at these.

NOTE

OF THE people who have watched the ways of the mule deer most carefully, some declare that stags are kind to the does and fawns; others that they throw the hound and the wolf on the trail of their own children, to save themselves. It is certain that they have been seen to help in the protection of their herds, and also to do the most cowardly and treacherous things; and it seems certain that there is a great difference in stags—some are cruel and cowardly; others do their part well in the world.

CHAPTER IV

Never trust a stag.

—The deer's part of the BOOK OF THE WOODS

THERE lived, in the hills which rise from the Valley of the Platte, in the country beyond Lost Park, where a dozen little streams trickled down toward the big river, a stag who was so famous among the mule deer that he might as well be called the Colonel. The Colonel had defeated every mule deer in the hills of his native country. If he took a dislike to a younger stag he would first challenge him to battle, and then, if the other refused conflict with those mighty antlers, would follow him through the mountain passes, fall on him from the rear and throw him over the cliff to die, or, perhaps, kill him with his horns.

When the Colonel's own antlers were in the velvet he was usually quiet and well behaved, perhaps afraid that some other deer, whose weapons were better developed, would attack him. His horns, which were shed every year, became fully developed in August or September, and

from this time until about the middle of the winter, when they began to loosen so that he was afraid to fight for fear of losing them, he was the tyrant of the hills.

If wolves attacked the herd of which he was leader, the Colonel was likely to run and save himself instead of giving the alarm, so that the other deer refused to follow him, and about the time his horns grew loose, so that he could not punish them for disobedience, would take some faithful old doe for their leader, and so save themselves from the perils of the winter.

That year, when the Colonel's antlers were at their best, and he was ruling all the deer in the Valley of the Platte, the young Captain strayed from his little band of followers to go roaming among the passes of the hills.

It was the time of the year when the elk whistle in the remote places of the mountains. Chipmunks darted about in the sun, which was hot and bright that October. Their food hordes were safe under the rocks; they had now attained new winter coats, in which the five stripes were as even and smooth as if just pressed by the tailor. Coneys—which are the Little Chief hares of the Rockies—had cut hay enough for the winter, had

cured it on the rocks and stowed it in their barns. One day the Captain found himself on a mountain-top so high that the clouds came down around it, making a thick wet mist through which he picked his way from rock to rock of the summit.

Gradually the clouds lifted. From the valley below they might have been seen curling upward like steam. On the mountain's top the sun was breaking through the mist, and the Captain looked from a little gulch crowded with dwarf evergreens, down one of the dim passes of the summit. Mule deer do not survey a landscape like the bighorn; the Captain did not see the snowy ranges spread before him over a hundred miles of space—only a little band of deer feeding on the leaves of some dwarfed bushes twenty feet below.

It was so still on the mountain-top that the shrilling of a grasshopper sounded a long way off, and he could hear as a fawn chewed the leaves from the bush. As he stood timidly watching this band of his own kind, there stepped from the gulch in which they were gathered the most superb stag in the Platte Valley.

The Colonel was large, sleek, and deep-chested. His antlers looked like the boughs of

a lightning-killed pine, sweeping backward from his forehead. There was a curious red gleam in his eyes, which were small, for a deer's. At sight of this magnificent deer the Captain would have run away; but the old fellow came to meet him in the friendliest possible manner. In some way by which a deer conveys his ideas to another, he invited the young captain to try a wrestling match with him.

Instead of being properly warned by his experience a few days before, the Captain was still keen for sport—and such a bold wrestler that he didn't mind trying his strength with the greatest stag on the Platte. He lowered his horns, and the older deer came at him with a playful showing of his teeth and shaking of his wonderful antlers. But his eyes kept the ugly gleam which had come into them at the first sight of this stout youngster from the lower Platte.

The Colonel was heavy and old; he could never have caught the youngster in a race, so he continued his playful behavior until he was within two feet of the Captain. "We're just playing, just playing," this he kept saying, with every motion of his body—till the youngster quivered with delight and lowered his horns for a trial.

But they did not lock horns. Suddenly the older deer struck with all his force at the youngster.

The Captain perceived in an instant that he meant to murder him. He leaped aside, halfway to the summit of the slope beside him, and the stroke that had been aimed to rip open his chest caught him below the shoulder. His blood spurted, spattering a large white rock. But wounds interfere less with running when very fresh, than after they begin to stiffen. A backward leap took the Captain out of the old stag's reach. Three more stiff-legged bounds and he had cleared the gulch and was running down the mountain on the other side. The treacherous Colonel did not attempt to follow him, but rejoined the herd and fell to browsing again on the bushes. Only, now and then, he would look about him for admiration, as if he had done something very fine.

The Captain continued to run until he saw before him the bowlders and white foam of the river. A trail of blood spots marked the path by which he had come, and wolves are clever enough to know that a blood trail will lead them to a weakened and wounded deer.

Near its headwaters, the Platte is wild and rough, so that not even a deer could make his way across. The Captain continued downstream, along its shore. He passed where a rock as high as a cathedral lay in the river bed, and the waters flung themselves at it with a mighty roar. Below this place were the rapids, and below the rapids the river grew wider and more quiet.

Here the trout leaped up into the sun and a sandpiper fished for snails and insects' eggs near the water's edge. The Captain was weakening now from loss of blood, and the pain was like a knife thrust into the flesh of his shoulder. He stumbled forward with every step; but he went bravely on until at last he came where an island appeared in midstream. This scrap of dry land between two currents was perhaps thirty feet by ten. Two or three young aspens had taken root on the highest part, and there was one evergreen, which might shelter the wounded deer from view. He picked his way across the rocks between the shore and his chosen refuge. His blood flowed down into the water, but the current carried it away as fast as it fell. Wolves, when following a ground scent, seem to lose their heads—they

will not think to search an island which is in plain sight.

When the persecuted youngster reached the island he lay down where his head was concealed from shore by the evergreen, trusting his hind quarters to the aspen trees. A few dead weeds of the summer rose about him, offering further protection.

Now he began, as all wild animals do, to treat his wound. His own tongue was the best cleanser he knew, and instead of a bandage he made a plaster of hair across the place. Nor was he a bad surgeon. An animal that treats its own wound seldom fails to check the bleeding and prevent poisoning. When he had dressed the hurt flank, the Captain closed his eyes and lay still, the weight off his wounded foreleg, ready to endure without any complaint some nights and days of pain.

All the loveliest part of that autumn he remained on his island. The wolves followed his trail to the river's edge, were puzzled where the water took it downstream, sniffed the damp wind in vain, yelled their pack cry to start the game from his covert, and then, baffled, went their ways for other hunting. The Captain did not

leave his refuge until his wound was healed and the first light snow powdered the aspen leaves in the golden streets of the woods.

He had learned his lesson; he never again trusted a stag.

CHAPTER IV

The wolf hunts for himself, but the dog for man.

—From the BOOK OF THE WOODS

EVERY wood creature knows that the hound is the servant of a great master. The mountain lion will fly in terror from a little Irish terrier she could crush with a blow of her paw, and sometimes, in her alarm, she will climb a tree in the hope of escaping a pup. The deer, in his native covert, is not in deadly fear of wolves, for the packs are broken in copsy places, and a brave stag may get the chance to fight them one by one. But any little whimpering hound can set the deer flying in terror. The dog always seems to know that his master is behind him. He wants to force all the wild creatures to do man's bidding, like himself, and sometimes he gets so bold as to attack even the grizzly; but that is to his undoing, for the great bear is not afraid even of man.

In the Valley of the Platte, that year, was a long and lovely Indian summer. Asters faded, but more came into blossom, even after the first

snow had fallen and melted. Since the dates for the book of the woods are all written in flowers or ice and snow, the wild creatures did not know when it came to be the fifteenth day of October. For them it was still late summer. The mountain grouse had just molted, and the ptarmigan was mottled white and brown. In calendars written by human beings, the 15th of October was marked, "Beginning of the Deer Season."

Each year there were three days of terror for the deer, when all the hills echoed to the rifle and the tongue of the hounds. A few deer would be browsing in the covert they had enjoyed all the summer. Suddenly they would hear the yap of hounds; they would leap for some dark gulch grown up with evergreen, but almost always, before they could escape, a gun would crash and one of their number be left on the ground behind them.

Does and fawns fled with the others; for they never learned that the law which allowed hunters three days' sport permitted the killing of horned deer only. It was the roving bands of youngsters, persecuted by their own kind and roaming the passes of the mountains, who were in great peril.

The Captain had recovered from his flesh

wound. There was not even a stiffness in his foreleg, when, on the evening of the 14th of October, with three other young stags following, he tiptoed from the cover of aspens which cut through the hog-back mountain, and looked down on the valley of Deer Creek.

He had meant to drink before lying down to rest. But a strange sight met his eyes near the stream. The wind lifted and let fall the flap of a tent that looked very white in the sunset. Before it, on the stream bank, a huge camp fire blazed, around which lay four or five dogs, their eyes red and eager from the fire. The wind carried the scent of wild game to the hounds; they were up in a flash, making the rocks echo with their cries; then all set out up the gulch in pursuit of the deer. But before they entered the cover the Captain and his deer were miles away.

They slept uneasily that night, with buck brush and ground pine for bed-covering, in a place just below the shoulder of the mountain. The Captain had chosen it wisely, for on the side from which the wind was blowing stretched a thicket of wild roses over many acres of space. Its bright red berries looked black in the moonlight, and

the long branches which stirred in every breath of wind were spiked with impassable thorns. On the other side, where the way was open to the river, were two paths running in opposite directions. If hounds should approach by one, the deer could take the other in flight.

The moon was full, that night, and very bright, with black shadows on its face, so that it looked almost like a Hallowe'en pumpkin lantern swung in the sky. All night black shadows of trees swayed in the wind and now and then some beast slipped past the hiding-place of the deer. But nothing happened to disturb them. The stars were hardly pale, the world just beginning to change from silver of moonlight to dark gray of dawn, when the deer slipped down to the river and drank. The Captain took only a little water; he knew that he might have to run for his life before that day was over, and a stomach full of water would be a hindrance in the race.

He paused, just to taste the wind, on a large boulder near the river. There was a white frost everywhere, which would leave the herbage black when it melted; and the scent of frozen sagebrush reached his nostrils. Pink, delicate, on either side the black velvet of his nose patch, they drew

in the next light current of wind. There was a scent of deer in the valley below—hot, running deer—and of hounds. A low warning from the Captain, and all his little band of companions were off for cover on the mountains. The gulches full of aspens received them from sight, or they ran to the darkest parts of the pine woods. The Captain did not learn the story of that 15th of October, but he never saw his friends again.

He took his own way cautiously around the shoulder of the mountain, making for the highest cover on its peak. But the sun was rising now, and with the dawn had come those currents of air which seem to blow to and fro in the hills in the early morning, so that it is not possible for a deer to keep in the right way of the wind from his enemies. Some current down the slope had carried his scent not to the hounds below, but to the deer they were pursuing.

Presently he came into sight—a huge and powerful stag, with antlers sweeping backward like a lightning-killed cedar. His tongue lolled and his breath came hard, for he was almost too heavy to run, and he did not look as when, long before, he had invited the young stag to a sparing match and then treacherously tried to mur-

der him. He came hard upon the trail of the Captain, who did his best to escape. When the youngster plunged down a dry watercourse between two slopes, he soon heard the hard breathing of the Colonel behind him, and he felt, uneasily, that the old fellow was planning to play him some trick. On he fled, down the old arroyo. He passed a point where a huge rock lay, marking the entrance to a cut made by flood water in the spring. Beyond this place the cover was thick, but he was afraid to turn aside. Mule deer run with long jumps, which serve to make them conspicuous when they are trying to escape through cover. But a little way now, behind the Colonel, were three brown-and-white hounds, whose voices rose in a constant outcry intended to call their masters. They were small dogs, but a deer who tried to fight them would be a fool. Two men were crashing through the undergrowth below; and now and then they would encourage their dogs, whose duty it was to pen the game into some corner and hold it for them.

The young stag ran past the cut and reached the end of the arroyo. Before him now rose a vast slope, which had no cover, but was dotted here and there by tiny evergreens. As he began

his climb, with terrified bounds from bush to bush, the Colonel reached the cut.

A bend of the arroyo and an outcropping rock hid him from dogs and men. He planted his feet for a mighty leap. Then he left the trail of the Captain, bounded across the dry waterway, and hid himself in the buck brush beyond the great boulder. Had he not thought of this ruse, he must, for he was badly winded, have been run down in the watercourse.

The hounds knew that they were very near the game; they yelled to their masters, "Yarp, yarp!" so shrilly that their cries pierced the air for miles on the mountain. When they came where the great rock lay in the cut, they halted and looked about them—they had found a break in the trail they followed.

Now their noses scattered the yellow leaves of the path, and the sun, getting into the watercourse, fell on their quivering brown shoulders and their long ears. The Colonel looked out of his cover, uneasily watching them.

They knew, unquestionably, something was wrong with the trail. The keenest nose among them discovered that it continued up the arroyo, in the direction of that great slope dotted with

cedar bush; but that way it was not just as before. Something had left the trail here at the boulder. The hounds looked about them.

All was still. The mountains above were wrapped about with that dim, purple shadow which comes in the autumn. Now, on the farther slope they could see the flying shape of a young stag, and they knew it was his trail they found just beyond that which they had mysteriously lost. They remained no longer to search the cover about for the Colonel, but bounded in pursuit of their new quarry.

The old stag stretched himself out to rest. There was nothing, now, for him to fear; he had thrown the dogs on the trail of the youngster. After a time the hunters appeared, making the best speed they could up the arroyo. Far away, close on the Captain's trail, the hounds yarp-yarped the tidings that they had trailed a deer. The men ran past the boulder and that pleasant cover where the Colonel lay at rest.

There was no rest for the youngster. Before long, the Colonel rose from his hiding-place and stealthily picked his way through gorges where the aspens hid him from view, back across the rocks that lie about a mountain-top, to a canyon

where he found the little band of followers he had ruled so long.

At about that time the Captain began to feel his breath shorten, and a knife of pain was in his lungs between the shoulder-blades, yet he dared not lie down to rest. The hounds would not even allow him to get his breath; he fled on, up one slope, down on the farther side, and again to the ridge of the next, till his knees failed and he stumbled as he went.

In midafternoon he saw a watercourse and managed to stagger across it. He knew that the current would kill his scent, and so dared to halt on the farther side. He was sobbing with every breath, and the wound which had seemed quite healed—that thrust he had got from the Colonel—stiffened his foreleg. He was afraid to lie down, and, although he was very thirsty, to drink. And his fears were wise, for he had not rested a half-hour when the quaking-aspens were stirred on the other side of the stream by three running animals. They were hot on his scent, and when they lost it lifted their “Yarp, yarp!” at the water’s edge. That would bring their masters. The Captain had to run again.

It was not long before the hunters had induced

their dogs to cross the stream; the scent had been picked up again, and the young stag was flying down a covert of evergreens. Now he began to run down-slope, making for the big river, where there were places a deer might rest and fool the hounds. He was very soon exhausted again, but stumbled on, with his eyes bloodshot and his heart ready to break in his chest, always toward the river.

The sun was about to set when he heard, across two mountain slopes, a loud roar of water. He took his way down a copsy gulch, the hounds a few paces behind him. And if they had been as wise as wolves they would have divided their forces, some running ahead to guard the way to the river. They did not do this, but remained in the undergrowth, so that when the Captain reached the river he was out of their sight.

He plunged into the water, but not to cross. Twenty yards above was a ledge of rock with a tree growing in front, its long brown toes in the water. The youngster picked his way toward this place, walking in the stream so that the scent of his trail was carried away. He heard the dogs, presently, out of their cover and on his trail again, but did not turn his head. The wind

was blowing directly across the river and, where the tree rose and covered that ledge from view, struck the face of a cliff as smooth as a wall, so that it could carry no tales of any animal who was concealed there.

The Captain shook the water from his hoofs; he had reached the ledge. Now, exactly as the old Colonel had done after throwing the dogs on his trail, the youngster stretched himself in his cover and peeped out, to see what would happen.

The hounds were, as usual, much puzzled to find that their trail stopped on the river bank. They looked all about them for the deer they had been following, and when they saw no sign of him yarped loudly for their masters.

When, presently, the hunters arrived, one of them began to urge the dogs to cross the stream. "He went across right here," he declared to his companion. "You can see the mark of a hoof." Then he whistled to the hounds, but they hung back. They knew that no dog or wolf could go through the Platte at this point. A bull moose could not have breasted that current, sweeping around a mighty boulder to dash down a slope like a toboggan slide. White with foam, the

water leaped far into the air. It sprayed the faces of the men, then thundered on to turn the wheels of a power-house far below. It could have turned no machinery here; wheels would have been broken to splinters. So the little whining dogs dipped their paws into the edge of it, then wagged their tails and looked imploringly at their masters.

"You'll lose your dogs if you try to send 'em across," warned the other hunter. "A dog can't do that."

"Then," the owner of the hounds demanded, "how did a deer make it?" And he patted the head of his favorite dog.

Finally an idea occurred to him. He could take his dogs across the river at the bridge far below, while his companion remained here to mark the place where the stag had crossed. No doubt they could pick up the trail on the farther side.

The Captain lay in his cove, with the river roaring by that screen of boughs, and watched till the hunter and his three little hounds came up the stream on the farther side. They looked long and faithfully for the trail, and the rocks echoed to the cries of the dogs, not their "yarp"

of the morning, but a whimper that meant defeat and bewilderment.

When he returned to his home town, without a buck, that hunter told an amazing tale that a young stag, after being chased the whole day, escaped his dogs and his rifle by crossing the Platte at a point where the water would have made kindling wood in ten minutes of any sort of raft that could be launched. And some people believed the story; but the old hunters smiled and shook their heads, saying, "That deer must have fooled 'em some way."

The Captain knew that he had been clever. Possibly he chuckled to himself in his cover that night. But when the stars came out and rifle-shots had ceased through the canyons, he began to think again of the Colonel. Somehow he felt that one day he and the old stag would fight in earnest and decide forever the question whether the old fellow was lord of the mountain. The tribes of the deer had borne this tyrant a long while.

CHAPTER V

In the end, every tyrant falls.

—THE BOOK OF THE WOODS

THAT every tyrant must fall is written, in the book of the woods, in large letters, but only some of the animals ever learn to read this maxim of their book. Certainly that old stag who had so long ruled the kingdom of the Platte must have imagined he could go on forever in power. Each year he had a lesson from which he might have learned wisdom. Deer shed their horns in the winter and while new ones grow immediately, some weeks or months elapse before the freshly grown antlers are large and strong enough to be of much use as weapons. Whenever the Colonel was without useful horns to enforce his demands, the other deer treated him with no respect whatever. While they let him stay and feed with them, they never asked his advice and usually he would stray away to the peak, to sulk, until his new horns were grown, with two or three other stags who had nothing to fight with.

But he never companied with the youngster

he had twice attempted to murder—only with such deer as were less bold and strong than himself. As summers and winters passed, the Captain grew into a large and powerful stag; his black-stockinged legs, lined with pale yellow, were light and strong; his body was not too heavy for speed, but he had a deep chest, with superb lungs, and a mighty neck, tough and wiry as a cat's. Each year, when his new antlers grew, they proved to be a finer pair than the last—till they spread above his head like two great fans against the wind. In the summer he was of the slightly yellowish dun color which best protects the mule deer in the sunny valleys of the Platte; but each autumn a beautiful winter coat developed—bluish, like the shadows on the snow under a clear sky. Once, as he was feeding in the Deer Creek country, he was spied by an old pioneer who said he had not seen so fine a stag since the old times when Utes ruled the mountain valleys, and the plains were the home of Cheyennes, Crows, and Sioux, who used to chase the deer to the foothills.

Gradually, for his beauty and his powerful appearance, the young deer grew famous along the Platte. People who saw him noticed that he was

almost always alone, and nicknamed him the Lone Stag. Many a hunter hoped to get that pair of antlers for his own front hall. But the Captain was clever in saving himself during the annual "open season." He always played the trick which had served him that year the Colonel set the dogs on him, would fly to the big river and hide behind cover against a cliff which caught the wind. Had he not been driven so hard that day in his youth, he might never have discovered this way to fool the hounds; and perhaps, in later life, a hunter might have taken him unawares. For every peril that a wild animal escapes renders him better fitted to take care of himself; and if we could read the true life story of an old stag or wolf or rabbit, it would be made up of a thousand adventures each of which almost—but not quite—ended in defeat and death.

There came a September when the Captain's antlers surpassed any along the Platte. If the Colonel's showed a greater number of points, his were handsomer, more evenly grown, and better balanced on his forehead. One day he took his way, eating the aspen twigs as he went, to the top of a peak which he had avoided ever since, some years before, the old stag thrust him through

the foreleg for climbing there. Just as on the former occasion, he passed through the deer trails where the leaves of the wild strawberry reddened against the earth, and around the inaccessible rocks on the summit, to a point where a gorge opened downward and several mule deer were feeding, under the command of an old stag.

It was a warm and lovely morning. A mountain grouse with well-grown and feathered chickens fed about the Captain's feet. The coney had cut all his hay for winter, and every rock hid the store of some chipmunk.

This time the Captain did not try to run away at his first glimpse of a herd. Perhaps he was tired of his lonely life. Through the bitter weather of other winters he had crouched all by himself under thin quilts of buck brush with ragged patches of snow. The wind whistled about his bed, in January, while other deer crowded close together for warmth. Or, he may have been tired of stealing off by himself to drink; all these years, if the Colonel spied him as he dipped his nose in a river or pool, he would creep behind him to kill him if he could, and usually he succeeded in driving the younger stag away from the water.

Perhaps he had been thinking. It may have come into his head that the Colonel did not really own all the water in the valley of the Platte, all comfortable beds and safe trails and good gulches for browsing. For when the old stag spied him now, and lifted his head, with nostrils just widening a bit, the Captain did not run away. He nipped a twig from a bush, and chewed it. Yet this was the Colonel's favorite feeding-ground!

The old stag left the herd and came toward his enemy. Instead of developing a new trick, he proceeded exactly as he had done some years before, playfully presenting his antlers in the deer's invitation to a sparring match.

But the Captain looked into his eyes and saw the old gleam of hatred. He did not attempt to lock horns in play, but drew backward a step, and wheeled for a fight in earnest. When the old stag's thrust came he was ready for it; he swerved to one side, and the Colonel rushed forward so violently, that when his thrust met empty air he rammed his body against a cliff. Then, in a moment, the Captain was upon him. As they thrust, each at the other, their antlers met, and they were locked together. Back and forth they swayed in the combat, and now it was a wrestling match to

test the toughness of their necks as each tried to force the other back upon his haunches. They were quite evenly matched. The eyes of the older deer reddened with fury, for he had not thought any stag along the Platte had a neck so strong as his. While he struggled with the Captain—and it seemed the battle must end with no victory on either side—a cunning plan came into his head. Suddenly he appeared to be very much weakened; his legs gave way under him and he made the little sound by which a deer admits defeat, as if a boy should say, "Let me up and I give in."

The Captain stepped backward, freeing his antlers to let his enemy run away, for that is what a defeated deer has to do; and the victor will pursue him a long way, but usually does not try to catch up with him or do him any harm.

As soon as he was freed, the old stag wheeled to take his enemy off his guard. He made a sudden and terrible thrust with his antlers, and the Captain, dodging backward, swung over the edge of the cliff. Here was a drop of two hundred feet to a stream with rocks in its bed. A few years before he might have gone down in such a place. The weight of his head saved him. For one instant he struggled with one hind leg in mid-

air and his old enemy pressing upon him. Then he had regained his footing, and fury was in him. He rushed upon his old persecutor. He had never used his great strength before; he did not even know he was now the most powerful stag on the Platte. But the onslaught he made in his rage was so terrible that the Colonel staggered backward. The Captain's great head pushed him down; he saw that he was defeated. And when the younger stag lifted his head to renew the fight, the Colonel scrambled to his feet, scarcely in time, and fled around the shoulder of the mountain.

The other deer ceased browsing a moment, to see their old ruler chased by an upstart. Down a slope dotted with dwarfed shrubs he went, with the Captain a few paces behind. He crossed a dry watercourse and would have stopped there, but the Captain ordered him on. Down the bed of the stream, between yellowish cliffs of sandstone, out where a mountain park appeared, dotted with buck brush, soon his flying figure was a mere moving dot against the earth.

His conqueror ceased to pursue him. After a little he climbed the gulch again and made his way along the shoulder of the mountain. Here

two bitter battles had been fought—that morning's, and the one after which he went down a trail all splashed with blood, to hide himself on an island in the upper Platte. Beyond the deer trail, in their favorite gulch, the herd which had so long acknowledged the sharpness of the Colonel's horns, was peacefully feeding again. The young conqueror came quietly to join them.

Nobody questioned his right to rule here; for it is a law of the deer that the conqueror shall become leader in place of his fleeing enemy. He was a Lone Stag no longer, but the greatest of all the lords of the deer along the Platte. And the story of his reign from year to year would be a long one, hard to tell.

It is not possible to say, certainly, how much any animal will learn of the wisdom of his tribe, or whether one may at some time go beyond the rest. Perhaps the deer cannot learn the truth that in the end every tyrant must fall. But this is as true in animal life as among men. So, if the Captain—now a great and very famous mule deer—should misuse his power and, instead of protecting the weak, as many other herd animals do, begin to persecute and oppress them, the time

will come for him also to be driven from the herd and to wander alone, a fallen tyrant, on the winter mountains. We can only hope that so hard a youth as the Captain's will make him too wise to deserve such a fate.

Field Work
with a Pencil

CHAPTER I

FIELD WORK WITH A PENCIL

IN the study of animals, "field work" signifies the making and recording of one's own personal observations. Frequently a young student will note something in regard to a bird or animal which he is unable to find in books on the subject. Possibly some person of more experience may even tell him he is mistaken. In that case he should return to examine the animal again and again, making himself very sure. If he finds the observation first made was correct, he should write it in his field notebook.

An example of this is as follows:

A young girl who knew little of animals was in the pine woods one summer. She noted several species of squirrels. The red, bushy-tailed ones had nothing to do with the graceful, gray tree squirrels, whose long tails waved like slender plumes. Indeed, there was hostility between the two kinds. In reading a book on the subject she found this statement. Older observers than she

was also told her that the gray and red squirrels would fight.

Another fact caught her eye as recorded in her book. For that section of country there were but two species noted—red and gray. But she distinctly saw a coal-black one. The morning following a russet-brown specimen appeared. Moreover, both gray and black were friendly with the brown specimen. It seemed that the book was in error: there were four, not two, kinds of squirrels in these woods, and all the different species except the red were friendly with one another. After repeated careful observations, she recorded what she had seen in her notebook.

Some weeks later she returned to town, where she had the use of a large library. In reading a book on native rodents, she came upon the explanation of what she had seen. The gray tree squirrel has what are called "color phases"—that is, there is, every now and then, a coal-black individual or a brown one. The gray, brown, and black were really of the same species.

The field notebook should be permanently bound or of the loose-leaf variety. I usually leave my book at home, and carry in my pocket a penny pad and a pencil stump. On the walk I note

down anything interesting; and when I return copy it in permanent form in the book.

But the most valuable work I have ever done, to help me learn about animals, is the sketching of them in the open field. Now, I am not an artist. I could not make one of the animal drawings appearing in this book, and the directions given in regard to sketching animals I obtained from the artist of the pictures. They are useful to me, as they will be to you, in making sketches; but no boy or girl should think that sketching will be of no use unless good pictures can be produced.

When you see any animal—say, a jack-rabbit—fix your eyes upon it, trying to note all its characteristics. You will observe upstanding ears; eyes prominent and dark; and in case the rabbit is at rest, the big oval of the body. By the time the “model” is up and away, you may have enough of these “points” in your mind to enable you to make a stagger at a pencil drawing. If you cannot recall the entire animal, draw the head alone, or the back parts, with the hind leg, or any other characteristic portion. The next time you catch a glimpse of the jack-rabbit, you may get a real picture.

If the young field-worker has made a draw-

ing that his friends recognize, he has something for his book. Usually it is not possible to copy such a sketch without losing the spirit of it. Take the entire page, even if it has a few drawings of parts, beside the completed picture, and attach to the notebook, along with your field notes on the jack-rabbit.

Besides your sketches of the animal itself, you will find value in certain still-life drawings. For instance, you may sketch a plant and write under your picture, "A weed the jack-rabbit was nibbling." It is easy to make a recognizable picture of a plant; you should be able positively to identify one from a drawing, and thus gain a valuable item to be recorded under, "Food of Rabbits." If you are studying a bird instead of a rabbit, a sketch of the nest will throw much light on your subject.

There is so much to know about every animal, that the student becomes bewildered, wondering just what to record. But if he will go out with the definite idea of making as many useful pictures as possible, he is sure to return with as many interesting observations as he has sketches.

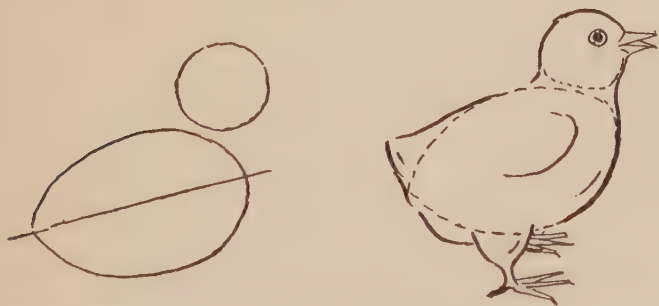
Hoping that these suggestions may help young field-workers—

MARIANNE GAUSS

CHAPTER II

DRAWING BIRDS

IN drawing birds it is well to start with an outline of the egg, from which these creatures come. A young chicken will be a good subject for the beginner. In the case of fully grown fowls—hens or roosters—the body will be found to have thickened, owing to the birds' habits of scratching the earth, in such a degree that its angles are sharper; and instead of the rounded oval, we will use triangles.



DRAW A BABY CHICK, USING THE CIRCLE AND EGG-SHAPE, AS SHOWN

To draw a little chicken begin with an egg, of which the large end forms the breast and the

small end tapers toward the tail. The legs may prove difficult. It is by getting them placed in the proper positions, and by drawing correctly the angles formed by the wings, that we obtain what is termed the "character" of the chick—or, that which makes it different from other birds. The head (see illustration) is made by employing the circle in a correct position.

From this comparatively easy study of a chick, the beginner will pass to wild birds. He may feel that to draw a wild bird so that people will recognize its species is an impossible task; but the artist who made the pictures for this book once directed a girl of seven so that she made a perfectly recognizable portrait of a robin.

If you will look closely at the illustration, you can see how the artist began work. The position of the bird's body was first noted, and the outline of it, without head, legs or wings, resembling an egg, was placed accordingly. Possibly, by that time, the bird had flown. But the artist was able to recall how the little circle which made the head appeared from her position, and how the legs were joined. By the time she had sketched all she could remember, she may have managed to get another sketch of the bird in the original

position. Before she could finish, possibly he flew again. But in time she had gained such a knowledge of all his characteristics that she was able to make a complete portrait.



DRAW THE ROBIN, AGAIN USING THE EGG, BUT AT A
DIFFERENT ANGLE

There is nothing more interesting than the study of birds with a sketch-pad; and there is no month of the year when the student cannot find plenty of subjects.

Note. For full-grown fowl, see p. 241.

CHAPTER III

DRAWING A CAT

THE common house cat has all the lines of the mountain lion and the lynx, the ocelot and the jaguar, the African lion and the Asiatic tiger. If a young person gets a good idea of the cat, he will know much of the ways of lions and tigers, when in future, he may possibly have an opportunity to visit the big-game countries. While sketching an animal, a person will observe many of the little tricks and ways which ordinarily escape our notice.

Suppose you have selected the cat as your object of study. You will hope, after several trials, to draw a cat that your friends will recognize—even though it may not be a fine picture.

Now the bodies of the cat family are all made up of curves, and in that respect are different from those of other creatures. In fact, Mr. Kipling calls this animal the one that walks alone. One noticeable thing is the long, waving curl of the tail; get this, and the line of the back, to the

head. Now make the underneath line. Then see how the hind-leg curls outward from this, toward



DRAW A HORSE, STARTING WITH TRIANGLES, AS SHOWN

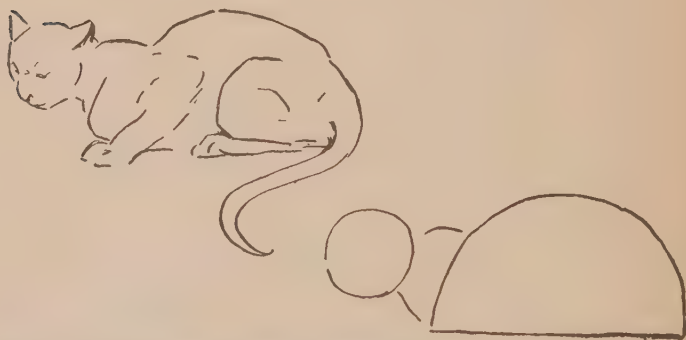


DRAW A HEN FROM TWO TRIANGLES, AS SHOWN

the back. Remember that cats walk on their toes. That sharp angle you see in the leg is the cat's ankle, away up in the air. Draw it with an angle.

By this time it is more than likely the cat

has moved away, leaving her picture without a head. You do not know how her head looks. So follow her till you can get a glimpse of her three-cornered head and blunted nose. Make this on another part of your paper. If when you show it to a friend he says, "That is a cat's head," you have succeeded wonderfully well.



DRAW A SEMI-CIRCLE AND A SMALL CIRCLE, AS SHOWN; AND COMPLETE THE DRAWING OF THE SEATED CAT

But you cannot very well hope to put your drawing of head and body together, making a complete cat. You will get the picture wrong and spoil it for yourself. The very best pictures of animals are made from memory. Now that you have studied tail, back, legs, and head, close your eyes a minute and see whether you know exactly how the whole cat looks. Then attempt to

draw the outline on your paper. Unless you are unusually good at drawing, you will find that another study will be necessary before you can make a good picture. When, at last, you get a recognizable drawing, put it away to keep.

Do not be discouraged when an animal gets up and goes away, spoiling your picture. Perhaps the cat was attracted by a sparrow alighting near her. She spoiled the picture, but gave you a chance to see her unsheath her claws at sight of prey—something you had read about, but which you had not actually seen, before.

If your cat does any new, peculiar thing, write down the fact and save the paper along with your drawing. If you persist in work of this kind you will soon have a real nature notebook.

CHAPTER IV

A FEW COMMON ANIMALS

THE RODENTS

THE rodents will be found pretty much alike in the main features of the body. Character is given, and the animals are distinguished from one another, as a rule, by their tails or their ears. Mice, chipmunks, rabbits, etc., may be drawn by keeping in mind the big curve described by the hind parts when the animal is at rest. If it is moving, you will be able to trace the same curve, with hind legs and tail in altered position. The heads of nearly all rodents are alike, and they join the body similarly; but the ears differ so widely that the character is much easier to render than in some other groups of animals. Suppose you have sketched a chipmunk, drawing the large curve of the hind parts, the head with a sharp nose, the bright, sharp eyes, the little paws. Your friends can scarcely distinguish your picture from one of a mouse. You add the ears, and a differ-



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RODENTS. NOTE THE KEY LINES THAT FORM THE BODIES OF RABBIT, SQUIRREL AND MOUSE. PRACTICE THE SEMI-CIRCULAR SHAPE; AND USING IT FOR A FOUNDATION, MAKE DRAWINGS OF ALL OF THESE ANIMALS

ence appears. But when rendering the characteristics of the squirrel tribe, you will find the tail to be quite the most distinguishing member. The curly bush over the little creature's back marks him at once as a chipmunk.

The rabbits will be distinguished, in part, by lack of tails. A stub—as in the jack-rabbit—or a tuft of white—as in the case of the cottontail—gives character. But all the hares are most clearly marked by their long, velvety ears and by eyes larger and softer than those of the rat, the squirrel, or the weasel, their fellow rodents.

THE COW

To sketch a cow or the buffalo at the park, begin with a rectangle, as in the illustration. Now draw the head with horns. Sketch the legs as you see them, using great care as to position. Add the characteristic bovine tail.

These directions apply equally to drawing the deer, the sheep or goat, the antelope in the park. But when drawing a deer or a pronghorn, if you are so fortunate as to have access to a zoo, pay especial attention to the head and eyes. You will notice that the antelope, which has its home on

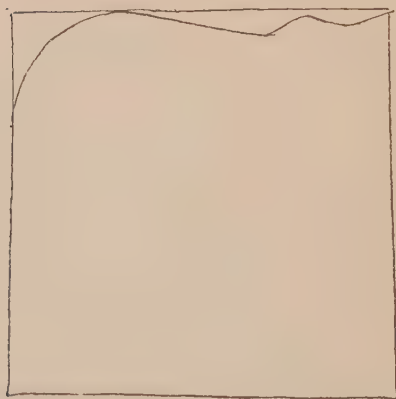
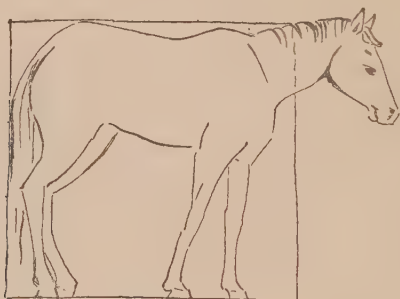
the open prairie, is distinguished by eyes extending far out from the head, almost like spy-



DRAW A THREE-INCH SQUARE. PLACE THE BACK LINE OF THE COW AND COMPLETE THE DRAWING, NOTING POINTS OF DIFFERENCE FROM HORSE

glasses. This characteristic gives the animal power to see for miles about him. But the eyes of the deer, which lives among the trees and

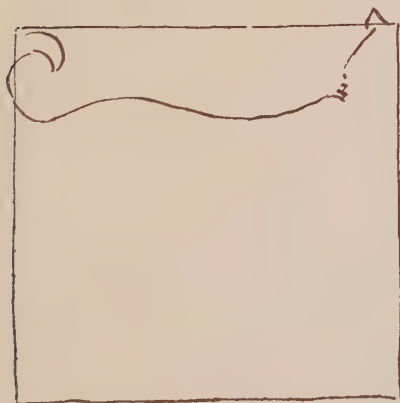
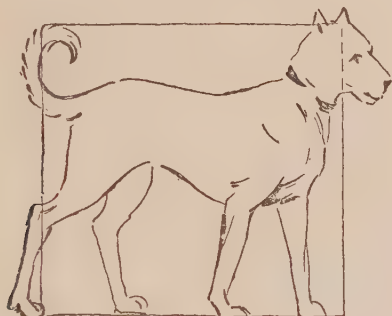
bushes, are set close to the head and often overshadowed by antlers. Note, also, the different character of the horns of these two animals.



DRAW THREE-INCH SQUARE. PLACE THE BACK LINE OF A HORSE IN POSITION SHOWN. COMPLETE DRAWING, NOTING POSITION OF PARTS WITH REFERENCE TO SQUARE

THE HORSE

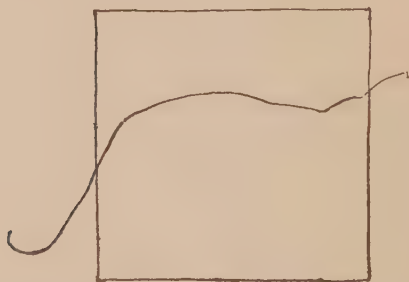
As the horse is a tall, long-legged animal, built for fleetness, his body is best developed from the square, as in the illustration.



DRAW A THREE-INCH SQUARE. PLACE THE BACK LINE OF THE DOG SO THAT THE RECTANGULAR SHAPE OF THE ANIMAL IS INDICATED, AND COMPLETE THE SKETCH

DOGS AND WOLVES

Draw the dog, wolf, coyote, or fox from the rectangle, as shown. But be careful to start with a rectangle in which the length of the body is correctly proportioned to its height. The differ-



DRAW A THREE-INCH SQUARE. IN IT COPY THE BACK LINE OF THE STANDING CAT, SHOWN IN THE DIAGRAM. DRAW HEAD, LEGS, ETC., NOTING THE RELATION OF EACH PART TO THE SQUARE

ent members of the canines vary widely: we have the short-legged dachshund, the chunky bull-terrier, the tall greyhound, and the thin, slinking

coyote, all in the same division. Heads and tails also differ widely. Indeed, in preparing to sketch one of this animal tribe it is well to make some careful preparatory sketches of parts.

But in all animal sketching, one rule is to be faithfully observed: Get the picture in your mind before attempting to put it on paper. It is often well, before beginning the drawing of an animal, to close the eyes for a few moments, calling its image before the imagination. It is when this has been done and one has paper and pencil before him, that he recalls and begins to apply these general directions for the sketching of common animals.

CHAPTER V

FIELD WORK

(1) Make a recognizable sketch of some member of the cat family. You may have access to a park zoo or to a circus collection, where you will see a lion, tiger, leopard, or panther. Before sketching these animals it will be well to make a study of some domestic cat.

(2) If you cannot make a sketch, write such a good description of some cat which you have seen that people will know what animal you are discussing. Study footprints of any cat. Measure the distance between prints of fore and hind feet. Answer (in writing) the questions: If traveling in a wild country, how would you recognize the trail of a cat? How would you judge of its size?

(3) Make a recognizable sketch of either cow or deer. Draw the entire foot of the animal, marking the location of the toe and the ankle.

(4) Write a two-hundred-word description of the cow or the deer. Find in a dictionary the word "ungulate," and say why your animal belongs to this division.

(5) Make a recognizable sketch of either goat, sheep, or pronghorn antelope. Draw, besides, a picture of the head, showing horns and eyes.

(6) Write a description of a sheep, a goat, or a deer. In addition, give an account of any behavior by the animal, which you have yourself observed.

(7) Make a recognizable drawing of any rodent except the squirrel. Also draw a picture of the head.

(8) Write a description of any rodent except the squirrel. Write a description of the animal's home.

(9) Make a recognizable sketch of some member of the squirrel tribe—chipmunk, ground squirrel, red or gray tree squirrel. Color your drawing.

(10) Write a description of some member of the squirrel family. Say how the colors of the animal chosen are distributed on its body.

(11) Make a recognizable sketch of any fowl or wild bird. Color.

(12) Write a recognizable description of any fowl or wild bird. Tell how the color is distributed on its body.



